

MOVIES: 'Orient Express' an old-fashioned romp **Page 24**

MUSIC: Sam Smith has room to grow **Page 37**

VIDEO GAMES: Sequel to 'Wolfenstein' satisfies **Page 26**

EUROPE
& PACIFIC
WEEKEND
EDITION

COLLEGE BASKETBALL
Bribery, kickback scandal
distracts from quality of
game on the court
Back page



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AFGHANISTAN

US troops may have to cover NATO shortfall

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

American servicemembers could be forced to pick up the slack in Afghanistan if NATO cannot reach its target for troop commitments from its members, officials in Brussels said Thursday.

NATO agreed Thursday to boost force numbers in Afghanistan next year to expand its Resolute Support mission from 13,000 to 16,000 troops. The alliance's goal is that roughly half the increase will be manned by U.S. allies and partners, NATO's top official said.

SEE NATO ON PAGE 2

San Juan VA hospital eases burden after Maria

By DIANNA CAHN
Stars and Stripes

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — In barely a whisper, the bearded man on the gurney spoke with insistence. "The hurricane didn't devour us," he said. "What the hurricane did was deprive us of light."

It was the lack of light — electricity — that put Nelson Noriega, 70, here into this Veterans Affairs Medical Center emergency room Wednesday. The disabled Air Force veteran had been struggling since Hurricane Maria stripped most of the island of power and water.

SEE SAN JUAN ON PAGE 8

REMEMBERING THE EDISON

64

Philadelphia's Thomas Alva Edison High School had the highest casualty rate in the nation during the Vietnam War. It's a designation the school has embraced.

Page 10

VIETNAM

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MILITARY

US, NATO plan cyber ops buildup in Europe

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The United States and its military allies in Europe agreed Wednesday to establish a new cyber command center that will allow NATO to incorporate electronic weaponry in its operational planning, the alliance's top official said.

The decision comes at a time of growing concern over Russian cyberintrusions and meddling such as a recent string of attacks on U.S. troops operating in Poland who have had their smartphones

hacked while on deployment, according to U.S. military officials.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said allies agreed to establish a new cyber operations center as part of an overhaul of NATO's command structure.

"We must be just as effective in the cyber domain as we are on land, at sea and in the air, with real-time understanding of the threats we face and the ability to respond however and whenever we choose," Stoltenberg said at the start of a two-day defense ministers conference in Brussels.

During the meeting that includ-

ed Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, allies agreed national cyber capabilities can be incorporated into NATO missions and operations. It amounts to a step forward for the 29-nation alliance, which has decades of experience conducting conventional military operations, but is less experienced in the cyber realm.

Stoltenberg said a cyber response to a potential attack could be more proportional than traditional military means.

"For NATO, it is always the aim to use minimum force to achieve maximum effect," he said.

NATO has been moving toward a more robust cyber operation. In 2016, the alliance formally designated the cyber domain as a new front line, adding virtual attacks as an area that could demand a collective Article 5 military response. Article 5 asserts that a major attack on one member state demands a collective response from the military alliance.

In February, allies approved an updated defense plan with cyber "rapid reaction" teams intended to help allies better defend against unconventional hybrid attacks.

As expected, allies on Wednes-

day also approved a plan to begin work setting up two new commands designed to ensure American reinforcements can safely cross the Atlantic Ocean during a time of crisis and maneuver throughout Europe with greater speed. The new commands harken to the Cold War, when there were roughly 30,000 troops stationed at 30 NATO commands. That number has dwindled to about 7,000 personnel working at seven NATO commands as security concerns faded in Europe.

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

NATO: Stoltenberg acknowledges 'gaps' in meeting Trump's troop goal in Afghanistan

FROM FRONT PAGE

"We are now in the process of increasing the troop level and in the process of force generations, so it is not possible to draw any final figures," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters. "But I hope and I expect it will be roughly 50-50 in the Resolute Support mission next year."

However, there are indications that allies in Europe are struggling to meet the U.S. halfway. Diplomats in Brussels told reporters that partner countries would likely be supplying only about 700 more troops.

Although NATO members have known for months about the plan to expand the advisory mission by 3,000 troops, they are still scrambling to fill slots. There has been little enthusiasm for the

increase among some key European allies.

President Donald Trump also has demanded NATO allies commit to troop increases in Afghanistan that are "in line" with the U.S. NATO, however, was vague Thursday about what commitments it has received thus far.

"We haven't filled all the positions or the posts that I've asked for," Stoltenberg said. "That is exactly what we are addressing now. ... [W]e still have some gaps we will continue to work on."

The top commander in Afghanistan, Gen. John Nicholson, said there is concern that the U.S. may need to fill a shortfall.

"We have made it very clear to the allies that we really need their help in filling these billets that we have identified," Nicholson told Reuters.

A possible boost could come from Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. NATO announced the two Gulf states plan to join the Resolute Support effort, though details about the nature of that support are unclear.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis declined to discuss troop numbers in Afghanistan, but did say that more than two dozen nations have indicated they are willing to provide more troops.

"We appreciate their commitment to stabilizing the south Asian region," Mattis said.

The military mission in Afghanistan, now in its 16th year, shows no end in sight. The U.S. currently has about 15,000 troops in Afghanistan, with some conducting counterterrorism missions and others serving as part of NATO's Resolute Support advisory effort. The troop tally is several thousand larger than what Pentagon officials acknowledged only a few months ago.



VIRGINIA MAYO/AP

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, center right, says more than two dozen nations have indicated they are willing to provide more troops in Afghanistan. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, center left, says his organization hasn't filled all the positions he's sought.

sory effort. The troop tally is several thousand larger than what Pentagon officials acknowledged only a few months ago.

Mattis said the aim is to back up Afghanistan's security forces in support of an eventual political

reconciliation with the Taliban. "Reconciliation must be Afghanistan-led with an open door to the Taliban if they choose to stop killing," Mattis said.

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

TODAY IN STRIPES

American Roundup	19
Business	20
Classified	46-47
Comics/Crossword	42, 51-52
Faces	43
Opinion	44-45
Sports	54-64
Weather	20
Weekend	21-42

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KRISTI KIMMEL

kimmel.kristi@stripes.com

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KRISTI KIMMEL

kimmel.kristi@stripes.com

+49 (0) 631-3615-9013

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PACIFIC

Rare 3-carrier strike group drills set to kick off

By TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy is gearing up for its first tri-aircraft-carrier training drills in more than a decade this weekend off the Korean Peninsula.

The four-day exercise involving the USS Ronald Reagan, the USS Nimitz and the USS Theodore Roosevelt strike groups will start Saturday to “demonstrate the U.S. Navy’s unique capability to operate multiple carrier strike groups as a coordinated strike force effort,” a Navy statement said.

The training — which will happen while President Donald Trump is in the Philippines wrapping up his two-week, five-nation tour of Asia — includes air defense drills, sea surveillance, defensive air combat training and close-in coordinated maneuvers, the statement said.

The drills will take place in the sea east of the Korean Peninsula, South Korean Ministry of National Defense spokesman Moon Sang-gyun told reporters Thursday in Seoul. He said there are no plans for his nation’s navy to join the exercise.

Though some have speculated



SPENCER ROBERT/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

A Navy F/A-18E Super Hornet assigned to Strike Fighter Attack Squadron 113 prepares to take off Oct. 10 from the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt in the Pacific Ocean.

that the presence of three carriers in the region is a direct response to North Korean aggression, Navy officials told Stars and Stripes on Thursday the exercise “is just another example of the Navy’s regular and routine presence” in the region.

“All three aircraft carriers are conducting routine deployments in multiple areas of operation that happened to converge in the Western Pacific,” said 7th Fleet spokesman Cmdr. Clay Doss. “This overlap is an opportunity to

show a unique capability — one that no other navy has — to operate multiple carrier strike groups close to each other.”

Pacific Fleet Commander Adm. Scott Swift said it’s rare for two carriers to cross paths, much less three.

“Multiple carrier strike force operations are very complex, and this exercise in the Western Pacific is a strong testament to the U.S. Pacific Fleet’s unique ability and ironclad commitment to the continued security and stability

of the region,” he said in the Navy statement.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying addressed the drills during a news conference this week in Beijing, saying the U.S. and North Korea should avoid escalating tensions in the region.

“Currently, the situation on the Korean Peninsula is highly complex and grave,” she said. “All relevant parties should exercise restraint, avoid provoking each other, jointly stay committed to easing the tensions on the peninsula and, meanwhile, make positive efforts to pull the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue back to the track of seeking settlement through negotiation at an early date.”

The last tri-carrier drills took place in 2007 off the coast of Guam during exercise Valiant Shield. The Navy in recent years has conducted dual-carrier operations in the South China, East China and Philippine seas.

The 3rd Fleet’s Nimitz strike group is on the way to its homeport in Bremerton, Wash., after wrapping up operations in the Middle East, where it has been attacking Islamic State targets during Operation Inherent Resolve. The group is scheduled to make a

port visit to an unspecified location before heading home.

The Nimitz’s sister carrier, the Theodore Roosevelt, arrived in the Pacific late last month on a regularly scheduled deployment to the Pacific and the Middle East, the Navy said. The carrier, homeported in San Diego, likely will take over missions previously conducted by the Nimitz.

The 7th Fleet’s Ronald Reagan strike group has been operating in the Pacific on a regular patrol. It stopped in Busan, South Korea, last month after a week of drills in nearby waters. The Yokosuka, Japan-based carrier’s port call came at a time of heightened rhetoric between the U.S. and North Korea over the communist state’s uptick of ballistic-missile and nuclear tests.

Ronald Reagan strike group commander Rear Adm. Marc Dalton said the recent drills showed the Navy’s commitment to protecting South Korea. Reuters reported late last month.

“The dangerous and aggressive behavior by North Korea concerns everybody in the world,” he said. “We have made it clear with this exercise, and many others, that we are ready to defend [South Korea].”

hlavac.tyler@stripes.com



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PACIFIC

'Sons inspire Dad'

Surgeon joined Navy after kin's battlefield death

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Dr. Bill Kriessoff is a serious man who quickly becomes warm and friendly in conversation. Refined, with a full head of gray hair, he looks as much like a grandfather as he does an accomplished orthopedic surgeon.

Despite his unassuming appearance, Kriessoff and his family are a heroic and selfless example of service in the post-Sept. 11, 2001, war on terrorism.

After losing his son, Marine 1st Lt. Nathan Kriessoff, in 2006 to a roadside bomb in Fallujah, Iraq, he joined the Navy medical corps after leveraging a meeting with President George W. Bush to obtain the needed age waiver. He later deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan, where he is credited with saving countless lives.

Kriessoff is on Okinawa this week as an honored guest of Lt. Gen. Lawrence Nicholson, the III Marine Expeditionary Force commander, who led the 5th Marine Regiment in Fallujah when Nathan was killed.

Kriessoff, who received an award dedicated to his son from the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, also was to attend Marine Corps birthday balls and to speak to Marines and members of Okinawa's military medical community about his experiences.

"Bill Kriessoff is one of my heroes," Nicholson said in a video tribute made by Steven Spielberg that aired at the 2014 Concert for Valor on the National Mall in Washington. "There's no doubt in my mind that because of his presence (downrange), there are Marines alive today."

'He wanted to serve'

Kriessoff's story starts with Nathan, who was deeply affected by the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

"Like many men and women of his generation, he wanted to serve," he said. "He chose the challenge of the Marine Corps to



Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

Cmdr. Bill Kriessoff operates on a patient with a lower-extremity wound at Forward Operating Base Delaram in Helmand province, Afghanistan, in 2010.

fulfill that."

Nathan entered officer candidate school in June 2003. Upon graduation, he was assigned to 3rd Intelligence Battalion in Okinawa, Japan, as a counterintelligence specialist. After exercises on mainland Japan and the Philippines, he wanted to deploy and was able to get attached to 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion when it was sent to Fallujah.

Bill Kriessoff said things were starting to get "rough" in Anbar province before Nathan arrived in September 2006. As Nathan deployed, his brother, Austin, was preparing to enter officer candidate school, having graduated recently from college.

"Almost five years to the day after September 11, 2001, I have the chance to put my money where my mouth is in terms of service," Nathan wrote in an email to his family, according to the book "For Love of Country"

by Howard Schultz and Rajiv Chandrasekaran. "I'm constantly reminded of that famous quote from Tom Hanks' character at the end of Saving Private Ryan: 'Earn this.' Earning it will mean sacrifice, determination, doing my job to the best of my ability. I chose this, and I wouldn't have it any other way."

Nathan, then 25, was killed Dec. 9, 2006, when his Humvee drove over explosives that had been buried in a dry riverbed. Sitting in the right rear seat, he took the brunt of the blast.

He was remembered as a natural leader who was dedicated to his Marines and had a talent for collecting information that potentially could save lives.

After his son was laid to rest, Kriessoff got back to work. However, there was a void, something left unfulfilled. He got the idea to join the service after a visit and a conversation about theater medicine with Nathan's battalion commander.



Courtesy of the Kriessoff family

Marine 1st Lt. Nathan Kriessoff, right, was deeply affected by the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and joined the Marine Corps as a counterintelligence specialist.

"At that point, I contacted a Navy medical recruiter and expressed my interest (in becoming a battalion surgeon, taking care of wounded and injured Marines)," Kriessoff said. "He politely thanked me for my interest but doubted I could get an age waiver since I was 60 at the time."

In August 2007, Bush went to Reno to give a speech. Afterward, he met with families who had lost loved ones in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the conclusion of an emotional meeting, Bush asked if there was anything that the families needed.

"I asked him directly, 'I'm an orthopedic surgeon and wanted to serve in the Navy medical corps but was told I was too old, and no disrespect sir, I'm younger than you are,'" Kriessoff recalled. Bush looked to Kriessoff's wife, who was supportive.

"He said, 'No promises, but we'll see what we can do,'" Kriessoff said.

"Two days later, I got a call from the recruiter. Kind of chuckling, he said, 'Bill, it looks like you got your age waiver.'"

Raising his hand

Kriessoff entered the service as a lieutenant commander in the Navy and joined a reserve unit, the 4th Medical Battalion, based in San Diego.

Intent on deploying, he took every combat medical course available. Then he raised his hand and volunteered.

In February 2009, he arrived in Iraq for a seven-month deployment. The country was mostly pacified by that time, so the care was predominantly routine, he said. He was able to visit Austin, who was deployed to Iraq with the Marines. Then he returned home.

Back in the States, Kriessoff took active-duty orders to Camp

Pendleton, Calif. After only a few weeks, he heard that the next rotation of doctors was heading to Afghanistan — and they had an opening. Once again, he volunteered. He hadn't even unpacked his bags from Iraq.

Kriessoff arrived at Camp Bastion in southern Afghanistan as the battle for Marjah was kicking off in February 2010. He was resolved to finish what Nathan started and to get Marines back home safely.

"We saw lots of combat injuries," he said. "Probably two-thirds were extremity injuries."

With so many injuries to arms and legs, Kriessoff said the goal was to clean the wounds, to stabilize the patients and to move them to more capable medical facilities out of theater.

In his time in Afghanistan, Kriessoff served as the primary or assistant surgeon on 225 serious casualties, including countless amputations, according to "For Love of Country."

Marines coming into Bastion with a heartbeat had a 97 percent chance of making it to the next facility alive.

"The results were good, and the care, in my opinion, was second to none," Kriessoff said.

He served for six years. He also deployed to Morocco and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Kriessoff admitted you never find closure after the loss of a loved one, he feels that he did finish what Nathan started.

"In most families, Dad inspires sons. In our family, sons inspire Dad," Kriessoff said.

"I was pretty much inspired by both sons who joined the Marines to put the uniform on and to serve ... [Nathan] was a natural leader with a keen wit, dry grin, and he was a joy to us, for sure."

burke.matt@stripes.com

PACIFIC

US training gave edge to Filipinos in Marawi battle

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

MARAWI, Philippines — Filipino troops guarding the ruins of an urban combat zone they liberated last month said American training and intelligence gave them an edge against 1,000 Islamic insurgents who fought virtually to the last man.

The Marawi battle zone — encompassing about half of a town once home to 200,000 mostly Muslim residents — is Southeast Asia's version of Mosul, Raqqa or any other Middle Eastern city reduced to rubble by Islamic State's bloody reign of terror.

After five months of fighting, the Philippine government declared victory in Marawi; however, it might be years before life there returns to normal.

On Wednesday, houses and shops in the battle zone were pockmarked with bullet holes and blackened by fire. Streets were full of rubble, the rusting wrecks of damaged vehicles and the bones of the dead. Soldiers said they pulled 23 cadavers from the zone earlier in the week.

Standing beside a downtown bridge across the Agus River that 13 Philippine Marines gave their lives to secure, Capt. Alex Estabayo said skills learned from American Green Berets were invaluable during the fight.

The Philippine Scout Rangers are experts in jungle warfare. However, U.S. Special Forces, including veterans of urban combat in Iraq, taught them close-quarters battle tactics during annual training exercises, said the 37-year-old 1st Scout Ranger Regiment officer.

"They had experience in Iraq. They showed us how to clear rooms and the basic principles of close-quarters combat — things like entering with a small number of personnel and operating in small teams," he said.



A child plays on a road leading to Marawi, Philippines.

Green Berets taught the Scout Rangers to exploit sensitive sites, a skill that helped them gather intelligence in Marawi, Estabayo added.

"We found documents in some of the buildings," he said. "We would cordon the areas and then exploit them and get all the available materials."

Col. Romeo Brawner, 49, deputy commander of the task force that liberated Marawi, said Americans also trained their army's only urban combat unit — the Light Reconnaissance Regiment — comprising about 700 troops involved in the Marawi fight.

The Green Berets didn't provide the Scout Rangers with counter-improvised explosive device training; however, they did teach other Filipino troops how to deal with booby traps and roadside bombs, Estabayo said.

Soldiers encountered 1,500 IEDs in the city, Brawner said. Insurgents detonated the bombs —



Philippine Rangers Capt. Alex Estabayo and Capt. Ramse Dugan fought in the battle to liberate Marawi from Islamic State insurgents.

PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

made from conventional ordnance or fireworks and placed in alleys, doorways and windows — using pressure plates, cellphones or command wires.

American intelligence support was key to success against the militants who were targeted by 105 mm and 155 mm artillery and 500-pound bombs dropped by the Philippine Air Force's PA-50 Fighting Eagle jets, soldiers said.

U.S. and Australian P-3 Orion surveillance planes and U.S. drones flew over Marawi during the battle, capturing images of the enemy.

America has night-surveillance capabilities that the Philippines lacks. U.S. personnel fed information to Philippine intelligence officers who passed it to ground troops, Brawner said.

"Their [intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance] complemented ours," he said of the Americans.

"They gave us not only the positions of the enemy but they tracked them using heat signatures. That was very useful," Estabayo said. "They would say things like, 'There are two enemy in this building at this time.'"

The Scout Rangers developed their own tactic during the battle.

"We call it the four Fs: fire, forward, fortify and fire again," Estabayo said.

He demonstrated how the troops captured a neighborhood near the river by firing to suppress the enemy, advancing to a bomb-damaged building, taking cover behind a wall and firing into rooms to detonate IEDs.

Philippine soldiers had heard about tunnels the insurgents dug under Iraqi cities. They didn't find tunnels in Marawi, but the Southeast Asian rebels replicated the Iraqi tactic of blasting holes in walls to allow them to move inside buildings fortified with sandbags, he said.

Like the Iraqis, the Marawi militants employed small surveillance drones. Government troops shot down seven during the battle, Brawner said.

Capt. Ramse Dugan, 29, an operations officer with the Rangers, said the most intense part of the battle was the effort to kill the insurgent leaders Isnilon Hapilon and Omar Maute, who attempted to flee near the end of the fight. Both were shot dead on the battlefield last month.

"It was a concerted effort by four battalions," he said. "Our troops were very alert, and we prevented them from escaping."

One hundred and sixty-five Philippine troops were killed in action and another 1,800 were wounded in the country's bloodiest battle since World War II. Of the estimated 1,000 insurgents, 965 were killed and three were captured, Brawner said.

The faces of the few not accounted for appear on wanted posters at checkpoints surrounding Marawi.

Officials have identified the remains of about 40 foreign fighters from Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. They're working to identify several, apparently Arab, bodies found on the battlefield, Brawner said.

Philippine forces rescued 1,700 civilians from the battle zone, but the militants shot 47 in the early days of the crisis and forced others to fight on their side, he said.

Marawi's damaged neighborhoods will take years to rebuild, said Brawner, who recently returned from a course at the Army War College, Pa.

Some parts of the city are only

lightly damaged. Residents have already returned to nine neighborhoods and will be allowed to return to two more over the next couple of weeks.

However, those who lived in the battle zone won't be going home anytime soon, Brawner said.

One of the evacuees, Soraida Abah, 25, is living in a tent with her husband and 3-year-old son at a camp near Marawi. The displaced Muslims were guarded by Philippine soldiers and in good spirits.

"We want to go home but our home is broken," Abah said.

robson.seth@stars.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1

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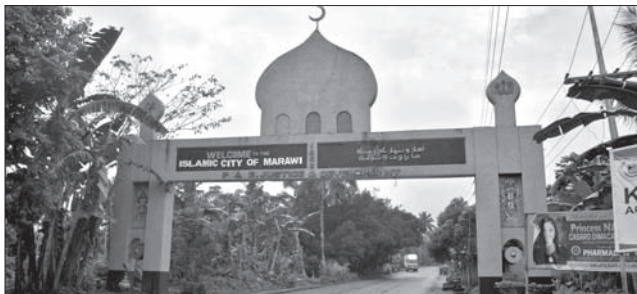
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This is the road leading to Marawi, where the Filipino soldiers fought a bloody battle against Islamic State insurgents this past summer.

MILITARY

Lawmakers told work remains on aviation needs

By CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A panel of senior military aviators told lawmakers Thursday that while progress has been made in readiness efforts, competing priorities are getting in the way.

The officials spoke during a hearing for a subpanel for the House Armed Services Committee, which was revisiting readiness concerns a year after they were raised.

A year ago, top aviation officials for the Army, the Marine Corps, the Navy and

the Air Force met with the committee, which found crisis-level readiness issues, said Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., chair of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness.

"Infrastructure challenges, underfunded spare parts and depot backlogs were a consistent theme," Wilson said at Thursday's hearing. With retention and training deficiencies, "all of these challenges are competing with no lessening of operational demand in the fight against terrorism and with increasingly aging and overused aircraft."

A readiness crisis throughout the mili-

tary has dominated recent debate on Capitol Hill. Some lawmakers say a spike in deadly accidents is being fueled by years of budget cuts.

On Wednesday, in light of the growing debate, a key panel of House and Senate members announced a deal on a \$700 billion defense budget plan. But the plan faces a major hurdle because it exceeds budget caps and will require congressional action to move forward.

On Thursday, senior military officials said they have seen gains in readiness, including improvement of flight hours for several of the branches. But plenty of work

remains, they said.

"We have made moderate gains in readiness," said Marine Lt. Gen. Steven Rudder, deputy commandant for aviation. "But we're not where we want to be."

Some said Thursday that priorities are misplaced, hurting efforts to address questions of readiness.

Major Gen. William Gayler, commanding general for the Army Aviation Center of Excellence at Fort Rucker, Ala., said they continue to juggle competing demands. "It's a balance," he said.

grisales.claudia@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @cgrisales

Marine Corps drill instructor abuse case goes to jury

By EMERY P. DALESIO
Associated Press

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. — A military jury began deliberating Thursday on whether a Marine Corps drill instructor is guilty of beating, stomping and choking new recruits or whether accounts of his abuse toward Muslim-American military hopefuls were overplayed by hope troops.

The eight-man jury at Camp Lejeune will decide whether Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Felix — a 30-year veteran of Iraq with the closely packed face of a boxer — was the furious center of an abusive group of drill instructors at the Parris Island, S.C., boot camp.

Felix was charged after the Marines investigated what drove one of his Muslim trainees at the boot camp to commit suicide in March 2016.

Investigators found unchecked abuse of recruits by junior drill instructors at the training depot. Six drill instructors, including Felix, were charged and the training battalion's commanding officer was fired. A court-martial for Lt. Col. Joshua Kisson is scheduled for March. Eleven others faced lesser, administrative discipline, said Marine Corps spokesman Capt. Joshua Pena.

Felix is accused of maltreating three Muslim recruits. Raheel Siddiqui, 20, a Pakistani-American from Taylor, Mich., committed suicide in March 2016 by jumping off a stairwell after Felix barked at and slapped him, prosecutors said. Siddiqui's family has filed a \$100 million wrongful death lawsuit against the Marine Corps.

Felix also is accused of obstruction of justice for telling recruits not to cooperate with investigators after the suicide. He's also charged with drunk and disorderly conduct and with making false official statements. He pleaded not guilty.

Felix faces the possibility of time in a military prison, financial penalties and a dishonorable discharge.

In 2015 and 2016, the drill in-

structor derided Siddiqui and two other Muslim as "terrorists," said prosecutor Lt. Col. John Norman in his closing arguments Wednesday. Felix also ordered former trainee Lance Cpl. Ameer Bourmeche to simulate chopping off the head of a fellow Marine while reciting "God is great" in Arabic, Norman said.

Bourmeche said he was ordered into an industrial clothes dryer, which then was turned on as Felix demanded he renounce his Islamic faith.

Bourmeche testified that after he obeyed and climbed into the dryer, Felix and another drill instructor asked him whether he was a Muslim. He twice confirmed that he was, Bourmeche testified, and twice the trainers sent him for a bruising, scorching tumble inside the dryer. After a third spin, Bourmeche said he feared for his life and renounced his creed. The drill instructors then let him out, he said.

Eyewitnesses testified Felix slugged recruits in the face with his fist and kicked others to the ground, sometimes terrorizing recruits while drunk, Norman said.

Felix was permanently removed from his duties as a drill instructor after the investigation began, Pena said.

"He was drunk on power and sometimes Fireball whiskey, and he used that power again and again," Norman said. "He abused his power to abuse his recruits. He punched them. He kicked them. He degraded their religion, and he put them in industrial appliances."

Felix did not testify. His chief defense attorney, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Daniel Bridges, said the dozens of prosecution witnesses gave contradictory accounts that the government unfairly fashioned into a case against the brawny drill instructor, who called all recruits "terrorist."

"Just because a lot of people said it, doesn't mean it's beyond a reasonable doubt," the attorney said. "Not credible equals not guilty."



JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

World War I memorial groundbreaking

Terry Hamby, right, chairman of the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, watches as ceremonial checks marking contributions from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion are displayed Thursday during groundbreaking ceremonies for the National World War I Memorial in Washington's Pershing Park. With him are American Legion National Commander Denise Rohan and VFW Commander in Chief Keith Harman.

Defense bill allows for Space Corps study

By CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Supporters of the creation of a Space Corps, a new military service that would be an arm of the Air Force, are holding out hope it will take off someday.

On Wednesday, a congressional conference committee announced a deal on a massive \$700 billion defense bill, known as the National Defense Authorization Act, to raise pay for servicemembers, increase the size of the military, fund new ships and aircraft and authorize new spending for missile defense.

The bill also allows for a study of the creation of a Space Corps, a positive first step, according to the House members leading the charge on the plan.

"We are pleased the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 takes the first step in fundamentally changing and improving the national security space programs of the

Department of Defense and the U.S. Air Force in particular," said Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Ala., and Rep. Jim Cooper, D-Tenn., the chairman and the ranking member, respectively, of an armed services subcommittee on strategic forces.

Earlier this year, the House approved their plan to install the new military arm to be included in the lower chamber's version of the defense bill. But based on opposition from several key figures, including Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, the Senate included language in their version of the bill prohibiting a Space Corps.

Now, defense officials will be directed to look further into the potential new service under Wednesday's negotiated plan.

Rogers and Cooper said their Space Corps effort is part of a systematic push to reform the Department of Defense national security space enterprise, starting with the Air Force.

"After months of thorough oversight, it became clear that the


Department of Defense, and the Air Force in particular, did not prioritize space capabilities even as threats increase, and were not structured in a way to ensure that we are able to deter, defend and, if necessary, fight and win in space," Rogers and Cooper said Wednesday in a prepared joint statement. "No single official could be held accountable for the success or failure of the space enterprise. Too many bureaucrats are empowered to say 'no' when it comes to defending our assets in space, and too few were empowered to say 'yes.'"


National security, space-related reforms in the defense bill approved Wednesday direct the existing Air Force Space Command as the sole authority for organizing, training, and equipping all space forces within the Air Force. This group will report to the secretary of the Air Force, Rogers and Cooper said.

grisales.claudia@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @cgrisales

Slain kids mourned: 'So many babies'

Pence attends service for church shooting victims


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VETERANS

San Juan: Lack of water, power, caregivers is complicating care for many

FROM FRONT PAGE

His wife, who wasn't well, flew to the U.S. mainland after he called her sister to send a doctor, he said. Noriega tried to fend for himself. But he has severe back problems, has trouble walking and suffers from emphysema. He uses a CPAP machine to breathe at night and took to sleeping in his car, where he could run the air conditioning.

He said he didn't eat for several days, and then, Tuesday night, in his dark apartment on the outskirts of San Juan, he fell and couldn't get up. He spent hours unable to call anyone, wondering whether he'd make it.

"All I ask is to let everybody know our conditions, the burdens everyone here went through," Noriega said in perfect English.

Since the one-two punch of Hurricanes Irma and Maria bludgeoned Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in September, the emergency room at the VA hospital in San Juan has been operating at maximum capacity. Patient counts are up from 80 each weekday to as many as 120, and from 100 to 160 each weekend day, according to Dr. Hector Alonso, chief of emergency medicine.

Not only are there more patients — people who were injured or whose health declined in the poor conditions — but many people with chronic ailments are in more acute states, Alonso said. More elderly people are coming in, and people who would be cared for at home have been forced out of damaged homes. The lack of power and water has complicated care for many, he said.

If families are not around to care for patients, there's no one to release them to once they've been treated.

"We don't want to throw them out on the street," he said. "It complicates things."

In many instances, the VA has kept people after they were stabilized simply because they had nowhere else to go.

The storms

Immediately after Irma hit Sept. 6, the VA emergency staff kicked into crisis mode.

Puerto Rico had not gotten the brunt of Irma, but nearby St. Thomas had, and its only hospital had been damaged. As the only federal health care facility in Puerto Rico, the VA hospital activated a triage center at the airport, where staff tended to more than 90 patients evacuated from St. Thomas.

For two weeks, VA doctors and nurses stabilized the patients, then sent them on to local medical centers in Puerto Rico, said Cosme Torres, regional emergency manager for the VA's Caribbean Health Care system.

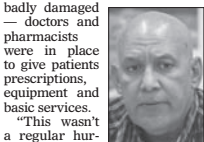
Then Maria came barreling in. The staff prepared for two days, closing clinics and ensuring that VA patients who needed special care were safeguarded at the main facility in San Juan, Torres said.

Even during the storm, the hospital never closed.



Dr. Hector Alonso, chief of the Emergency Department at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in San Juan, Puerto Rico, recounts how the hospital and its staff weathered Hurricane Maria and its aftermath.

When it was over, the staff barely had time to take stock. All but two clinics around Puerto Rico were reopened immediately. In Ponce in the south, and Arecibo, west of San Juan on the northern shore — where clinics were badly damaged — doctors and



Torres

pharmacists were in place to give patients prescriptions, equipment and basic services.

"This wasn't a regular hurricane," Torres said. "It was like a nuclear bomb hurricane."

With thousands of homes damaged or destroyed, and much of the island lacking power or running water, it quickly became apparent that staff and patients were in crisis.

Meanwhile, patients kept coming.

To keep up with the intense pace, the VA mobilized volunteers from around the U.S., under a program called Disaster Emergency Medical Personnel System, or DEMPS.

Since mid-October, more than 400 volunteers — from doctors and nurses to administrative personnel — have worked in Puerto Rico in two-week rotations.

"It's challenging, but really



PHOTOS BY CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

Air Force veteran Nelson Noriega, 70, lies in an emergency room bed Wednesday at the VA Medical Center in San Juan. Noriega said life has been "terrible" ever since Hurricane Maria hit the island Sept. 20.

rewarding," said Charity Haddican, a volunteer from the VA in Sioux Falls, S.D. The primary care and women's health nurse was inspired by her Puerto Rican colleagues to help any way she could.

"I am a nurse, but if I can run to the lab or if I can take a person to X-ray to save a person that normally works here some steps — even mopping the floor — I just want to give them a hand," she said.

Helping veterans

There are 93,000 veterans in Puerto Rico — 67,000 enrolled with the VA.

Military service makes people on the island extremely proud, said Torres, a retired Army veteran who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was that pride that kept VA employees coming to work in the days and weeks after

the hurricane, he said.

"Even with the challenges we faced every day, people came back to work for veterans," he said.

In addition, Alonso said, in Puerto Rico, sometimes veterans don't feel fully appreciated on the mainland "in spite of their enormous contributions to our military."

"So yes, we are very proud Puerto Rican veterans for our contribution."

Dedication aside, the enormity of the disaster does weigh on the staff.

"We have had our fair share of breakdowns among employees," said Alonso. "It's been very emotionally charged."

But people have shown an ability to adapt to their new reality, he said.

In the first days after the hurricane, Alonso said they were all so busy getting the hospital running that they couldn't see the big picture. Communications were down. The switchboard couldn't make calls.

But then he started seeing patients coming back, and saw the hospital's ability to serve them. And he understood.

"It's not about the setup of the hospital," he said. "It's not about the cellphone networks or the electrical grid.... It's not about the rescuers. It's about the patients."

Saving lives

After Maria struck, VA staff around the island began seeking out the most vulnerable patients to make sure they were OK.

In Utuado, one of the hardest-hit areas, where the storm washed out the main bridge connecting residents with supplies, staff had not heard from one patient in days, Torres said.

When they went to the man's home, they saw it was badly damaged. They arranged to have him

flown to San Juan for proper care.

On a different day, Torres and a team went to Vieques, a separate, small island that is part of Puerto Rico, to bring medication and to check on patients. He encountered a man whose condition was horrific.

"He had spent a couple of days without water, without food," Torres said.

"We got that veteran into a helicopter," he said, wiping his eyes. "We flew him back. He was admitted and he is fine."

There was something about seeing a veteran suffering so much, Torres said.

"You look at the face of that veteran — that guy was a vet like me," he said. It hurt Torres "to have that hero suffering ... and knowing that guy was in need of food and water when we have food on the mainland."

Seeing him later in a hospital bed, with the color back in his face and a big, broad smile, made it all worthwhile.

"That's why I am here," he said.

Nowhere to go

Lying on the ER gurney Wednesday, Noriega said he had tried to keep going without being a burden. He didn't want to bother his daughter, who lived on another part of the island.

But after his fall, he realized he should call her.

As Alonso left Noriega's bedside, he wondered how Noriega would find his independence again.

Even when the emergency passes, Alonso said, "How am I going to send him home now?"

"Who is going to take care of him?"

cahn.dianna@stripes.com
Twitter: @DiannaCahn

Carmen Garcia, left, a registered nurse at the VA Medical Center in San Juan, hugs licensed practical nurse Charity Haddican on Wednesday in appreciation of her volunteer work at the hospital.

NATION

Dems see wins as momentum for 2018 state races

By DAVID A. LIEB
AND CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY
Associated Press

Sweeping Democratic victories in Virginia and key gains in other 2017 state legislative races have lifted Democratic hopes of even bigger wins in next year's midterm elections as they seek a greater voice in how political districts will be redrawn for the decade to come.

Democrats won the governors' offices in Virginia and New Jersey on Tuesday, erased a previously dominant Republican majority in the Virginia House of Delegates and won a special election that gave them control of the Washington state Senate.

All told, Democrats flipped about two dozen state legislative seats around the country Tuesday and now have gained at least 30 seats previously held by Republicans since President Donald Trump won election last year, reversing several years of Republican momentum.

"In general, this is a rebuke of Republican governance of states," said Jessica Post, executive director of the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee. "The other thing it said is we can win

all across the country."

The fight for control of legislative chambers matters not only for policies on health care, taxes and education, but also because the legislatures in most states determine how future congressional and state legislative districts are drawn. The next round of redistricting will take place after the 2020 Census, and both parties are focused on controlling as many states as possible by then.

Republicans swept to power in many states in the 2010 elections, just in time to use their new authority during the last round of redistricting. Since then, Republicans have gained more than 900 state legislative seats nationwide.

This year's Democratic victories are "a very small step forward" by comparison and largely have come in "seats, that by all rights, they probably should have had already," said Matt Walter, president of the Republican State Leadership Committee.

Heading into Tuesday's elections, Republicans controlled more than two-thirds of all state legislative chambers, including full control of both chambers and the governor's office in about two dozen states. By comparison,



JAH CHIKWENDU, THE WASHINGTON POST/AP

Danica Roem, center, who ran for the House of Delegates against GOP incumbent Robert Marshall, is greeted by supporters Tuesday as she prepares to give her victory speech at Water's End Brewery in Manassas, Va.

Democrats had complete control in only a half-dozen states. Just five states had legislatures in which each party controlled one chamber, and several of those involved bipartisan coalitions.

During the past year, Democrats have launched a coordinated effort to chip away at Republican dominance from lower-level offices on up. It's been aided by the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, which is chaired by former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder.

Democratic Party leaders pointed to Tuesday's results as the fruits of their revamped strategy.

Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez told reporters on a conference call that 33 groups worked in Virginia to help elect Democrats, doubling

the number of voter contacts from four years ago. Various Democratic entities poured millions of dollars into races there and elsewhere.

Democrat Ralph Northam won the Virginia governor's race, and Democrats whittled the Republicans' 66-34 House majority down to a nearly even split with several races still too close to call. Most of the Democrats' gains came in districts that had voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton over Trump in last year's elections.

The Democratic legislative candidates were aided by a large voter turnout in the governor's race. Anti-Trump sentiment motivated a lot of voters who previously didn't take an interest in governor's races, Republican consultant Chris Jankowski, an archi-

tect of the GOP's 2010 REDMAP redistricting project, told attendees Wednesday at a Harvard University redistricting conference.

Democrats would have won even more Virginia House seats had the districts not been gerrymandered so heavily in favor of Republicans, said Kelly Ward, executive director of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee.

"It shouldn't take tsunami-level elections in order to maybe tie — maybe — in the House of Delegates," Ward said at the Harvard conference.

Nonetheless, Democrats say the large swing in Virginia shows it's possible for them to flip other chambers next year, including the Colorado Senate, the Michigan House and both chambers of the Minnesota Legislature.

Senate bill to unwrap with tax cuts, end to local deduction

By MARCY GORDON
AND ERICA WERNER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate version of the Republicans' high-stakes tax overhaul is set to be unveiled with billions of dollars in tax cuts for people and corporations, a repeal of the federal deduction for state and local taxes, and a likely compression of the personal income tax brackets from seven to four.

The House measure, meanwhile, needs approval by the tax-writing committee after last-minute changes by its primary author.

The legislation pulling the attention of lawmakers in both chambers would bring the first major reshaping of the U.S. tax code in three decades. Underscoring the political imperative for the Republicans and President Donald Trump, top adminis-

tration officials met privately with GOP senators Wednesday as Senate tax writers put finishing touches on their bill.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, planned to take the wraps off the new Senate bill on Thursday. A day before, some of its most basic contours were set while others appeared in flux.

In the House, Ways and Means Committee Chair Rep. Kevin Brady was making last-minute changes before the panel votes Thursday to deliver it to the full House. Brady's changes presumably are being made to meet the \$1.5 trillion maximum that the bill is allowed to add to the \$20 trillion deficit. A preliminary estimate by Congress' nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation said the House measure as currently written would add \$74 billion more to 10-year deficits than allowed.

With his revisions, Brady, R-Texas, also

likely is looking to nail down Republican votes so the House can approve the legislation soon. Democrats are expected to oppose it uniformly.

Brady wouldn't give any hint Wednesday of what might be coming, and committee Democrats could only speculate. "Substantial change is coming in their proposal," Rep. Richard Neal, of Massachusetts, the panel's senior Democrat, told reporters.

Neal spoke after the committee's third day of debate on the nearly \$6 trillion bill, with the Republican-led panel wading through dozens of amendments and spiking Democrats' efforts to revise it.

As Republican leaders hunted for ways to pay for their tax cuts, Sen. David Perdue, R-Ga., said the Senate measure would eliminate fully the deduction people can take for state and local property, income and sales taxes. The House version would

retain the deduction only for property taxes and would cap that at \$10,000, drawing opposition from GOP lawmakers from states with high local taxes like New York and New Jersey.

Perdue said the Senate plan would compress the current seven personal income tax brackets down to four. On Tuesday, two Republicans had said the bill would retain the seven brackets but cautioned that changes were possible.

Hatch's plan was likely to include a one-year delay in its reduction in the corporate tax rate, which will be permanent, said a GOP aide who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. Shrinking that rate to 20 percent from its current 35 percent has been a primary goal of Trump and the business community. Delaying that reduction would help contain the bill's costs.

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VIETNAM



Keeping the flame

Philadelphia high school embraces its tragic legacy



Ken-Yon Hardy/Stars and Stripes

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

PHILADELPHIA

It took 50 years for Louis Viscusi to overcome the mental obstacles that kept him from the blighted neighborhood in North Philadelphia that he always meant to visit.

It was home to William Moore, the Marine who took a bullet for him six weeks into their tour in Vietnam in 1967 — the first man Viscusi saw killed — and he wanted to let Moore's family know that he didn't suffer in the end.

On May 26, 70-year-old Viscusi, who lives in St. James, N.Y., showed up at Moore's old high school in a gray suit. He navigated his walker with one hand, and with the other he clung onto a laminated page of information about Moore printed from the Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans Memorial website. On it, he had scrawled the address of Moore's old home, of his old parish. He'd been to both places, but found no one who knew Moore.

"He left a mark on my life that I tried to put out of my mind," he said. "Now I'm sorry I didn't come sooner. I should've come 50 years ago."

Viscusi didn't find Moore's family that day. But he did find many of his classmates and a school and community that takes the time to honor, every year around Memorial Day, Moore and the many other former students who died in Vietnam.

The school, Thomas Alva Edison High School, had the highest casualty rate during the Vietnam War of any high school in the United States — a fact that's confirmed by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (the nonprofit that built the Vietnam Wall), and has been recognized by local, state and federal government officials.

It's a designation the school has embraced.

Now — 50 years since the war — efforts to memorialize the "Edison 64" are stronger than ever. A local author is writing a book about the school, a few veterans are trying to obtain a posthumous award for one of the 64 former students who died. And more veterans — graduates of Edison who survived Vietnam or others who served alongside the 64, like Viscusi — are making the trip to Philadelphia.

Holding onto its history

The Edison High School of today bears little resemblance to what it was in the late 1960s and early '70s.

Back then, when the men who went on to serve in Vietnam attended, Edison was an all-boys school with a predominantly African-American student population, said Darryl Johnson, an Air Force veteran who graduated from Edison in 1972. The three-story, Romanesque-style structure was built in 1903, with gargoyles, a central tower and turrets.

In 1979, the school became co-ed, and the demographics shifted — the student population was 71 percent Latino this past school year, according to data from the Philadelphia school district. In 1988, Edison High School was moved to a more modern building two miles to the north, across from a large Catholic cemetery in the Juniata Park neighborhood. It became a combined high school and vocational center and was renamed the Thomas Alva Edison High School/John C. Faria School Center.

The original structure, which made the National Register of Historic Places, was

damaged by fire in 2011 and demolished in 2013. A Burger King and Save-a-Lot took its place.

Through the changes, Edison held onto at least part of its history.

A memorial to the former students who died in Vietnam takes up a large portion of a wall in the school's main lobby. Hung the highest is a wooden plaque with spaces for 100 names, 64 of them filled out. School administrators ordered it made in the late 1960s, when they realized the death toll of former students was climbing.

Across the lobby from the memorial wall is a glass case holding more tributes to the 64 students: a certificate of congressional recognition, a notice from the state Senate about a historical marker awarded to the school and a city resolution to rename a three-block section of road "Edison 64 Memorial Street."

Just outside the school's front doors is a memorial garden for those who died

A memorial to the former students who died in Vietnam takes up a large portion of a wall in the school's main lobby. Hung the highest is a wooden plaque with spaces for 100 names, 64 of them filled out. School administrators ordered it made in the late 1960s, when they realized the death toll of former students was climbing.

in Vietnam. In the junior ROTC room, a large banner hangs on the wall, listing the names of the 64. Also hung around the room are name rubbings in blue crayon, that students took from the Vietnam Wall during a field trip to Washington.

No one is completely sure what factors aligned to make Edison the high school with the highest death rate in Vietnam, Johnson said, but some have guessed. Johnson joined the Air Force voluntarily to get out of the neighborhood and away from gangs. He assumes some of the 64 did, too. Gerald Jones, a Marine Corps veteran who graduated in 1965, said some of the 64 had gotten into trouble, and the court gave them a choice — jail or military service. Others brought up theories about the draft targeting poverty-stricken areas.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



FROM PAGE 10

Whatever led to the high loss of life, Edison's current principal, Awilda Ortiz, described it as a legacy — and not one she or the rest of the school is shying away from.

"It's a shame, I know that. But it's also an honor, too," said David Morson, an Air Force veteran and one of the Junior ROTC instructors. "I think it shows the spirit of the Philadelphians. I think it speaks highly about the Philadelphia fighting nature, you know?"

The high point each year for recognizing the 64 comes the Friday before Memorial Day, when the school invites former students who served in Vietnam and fills its auditorium for a three- to four-hour ceremony. It's grown from its first iteration in 1968 as a simple candle lighting.

Johnson, who returned to Edison High School decades later as a teacher, is the one mostly responsible for keeping the tradition going. It's meant not only to honor the dead, he explained, but to inspire the current students, who face some of the same challenges as the school's previous generations.

Ortiz said Edison had a history of "turning tribulations into fortitude."

"So many principals have come and gone; the school has changed," Johnson said. "But this is a tradition we do, not only for our guests, but for students. We want them to understand the legacy of this school and embrace it. We want to make sure this story is told every year."

The path back to Edison

When Johnson started as a student at Edison High School in 1968, there was a lot going on close to home: the civil rights movement, hippie counterculture, gang activity within his north Philadelphia neighborhood. It was hard to pay attention to what was happening in Vietnam and to his schoolmates who were serving there.

"At 15 years old, trying to stay focused on the war was a challenge, although we should've been more focused on these guys," Johnson said.

Like other students, Johnson paid attention only when the principal, Albert Glassman, came and the PA system to announce another death. The students and teachers would hold a moment of silence, and then go back to their work.

Then, the school held its first candle lighting in the auditorium. At some point that year, the memorial plaque, with its 100 names, appeared on a wall near the school entrance.

"We kept looking at that like, 'Wow, 100. Are we going to lose 100 graduates?'" Johnson said. "Some of us were looking into the military ourselves and wondering if we were ever going to show up on that wall."

When he graduated in 1972,

Edison 64: 'These guys died for us'



1. Marine Cpl. Charles J. Antonelli, 20
2. Army Pvt. Nathaniel Washington, 18
3. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Samuel F. Walker Jr., 26, MIA
4. Marine Cpl. Richard McNichols, 22
5. Army Pfc. Hector W. Bryan, 20
6. Marine Pfc. Michael M. White, 20
7. Army Sgt. Angelo Santiago, 22
8. Army Sp4 William B. Blackmon Jr., 20
9. Marine Lance Cpl. Milton G. Clayborne, 19
10. Marine Lance Cpl. William Chapman Jr., 25
11. Marine Pfc. Bernard R. Woshloke, 20
12. Marine Pfc. James J. Allen Jr., 18
13. Army Pfc. General White, 19
14. Army Pfc. Zackrie Brookins Jr., 22
15. Army Sp4 Gerald J. Wahlen, 22
16. Marine Pfc. Randolph T. Jefferson, 18
17. Marine Pfc. Samuel N. Burton, 19
18. Marine Lance Cpl. John E. Addison, 19
19. Army Pfc. Irvin J. Hopkins, 25
20. Marine Pfc. Glenn Carter, 19
21. Army Pfc. Loral L. Levens III, 22
22. Marine Lance Cpl. Lewis N. Welsh, 21
23. Marine Pfc. John W. Jolley Jr., 19
24. Army Sp4 Mark Smith Jr., 19
25. Army Pfc. Neely J. Singletary, 22
26. Army Sp4 John J. Thomas, 20
27. Army Sp4 Joe Thomas Johnson Jr., 18
28. Army Sp4 Lawrence J. Reichert Jr., 20
29. Army Pfc. Gerald J. Maguire, 20
30. Marine Pfc. Deighton A. Danielles, 20
31. Army Sp4 Henry B. Thomas, 20
32. Marine Pfc. Kenneth Pettus, 18
33. Marine Cpl. Charles J. Glenn III, 22
34. Marine Pfc. John G. Orsino, 22
35. Marine Cpl. Richard A. Carter, 23
36. Army Sp4 Aaron Thomas, 18
37. Marine Pfc. Darnay Shubert, 18
38. Army Sgt. Leroy W. Peagler, 25
39. Army Sgt. Wayne T. Dillman, 20
40. Marine Staff Sgt. James B. White, 26
41. Marine Cpl. Joseph Mieczkowski, 19
42. Army Sgt. Robert J. Campbell, 24
43. Army Pfc. Stephen P. Blanchett, 19
44. Army Pfc. Louis A. Cokembly, 19
45. Army Pfc. Harold A. Doman, 20
46. Army Cpl. Dennis Kuzer, 20
47. Army Pfc. Joseph F. Lodise Jr., 20
48. Marine Pfc. Joseph Johnson Jr., 21
49. Marine Pfc. Samuel Rodriguez, 19
50. Army Pfc. Roscoe Glover Jr., 19
51. Army Staff Sgt. Harry James Miller, 39
52. Army Sgt. Robert Torres, 20
53. Marine Cpl. Rocco R. Isaac, 19
54. Marine Pfc. William J. Moore, 19
55. Army Sp4 George R. Martin, 18
56. Marine Pfc. Duane A. Weber, 18
57. Army Pvt. Joseph G. Williams, 18
58. Marine Pfc. Adolfo Martinez, 20
59. Army Pfc. Bill F. Seedee III, 20
60. Army Pfc. Kenney E. Lassiter, 19
61. Army Sp4 Andrew Garcia, 20
62. Army Cpl. Francis A. Zerggen, 19
63. Army Cpl. James T. Swift Jr., 22
64. Marine Pfc. Alfred A. Purvis, 18

Johnson enlisted in the Air Force and qualified to become an aircraft mechanic on FB-111 Aardvark jet bombers. Later, he was a flight engineer on C-141 airlift aircraft at McGuire Air Force Base outside Trenton, N.J. He joined, he said, to "get away from gangs, from the neighborhood, from the little world in north Philadelphia that was all I knew."

More than 20 years later, his path led him back there. Johnson returned in 1999 to teach mathematics.

"When I walked into the building, I realized the tradition not only continued, it grew," he said.

For the next 17 years, he would organize and grow the annual remembrance of those who died in Vietnam. Johnson retired in 2014 and moved to Delaware, and he's still organizing the ceremony.

During a rehearsal May 25, Johnson gave instructions to the students lighting the candles and the color guard presenting the flags. He fretted over the details — the route veterans would take when walking in, where the bugler should stand when playing taps and how to pronounce

each name on the list of special guests.

Johnson was nervous, he said — he always is before the ceremony. And this year's was especially important. He was excited to update the crowd about his recent attempts to secure the Medal of Honor for one of the 64, Spec. Loral "Earl" Lee Blevins III.

'A very good soldier'

Last year, Johnson read a memoir published in 2015 by noted venture capitalist and Vietnam veteran Charles W. Newhall III. In one chapter, Newhall writes about a reconnaissance mission in August 1968 on what would later become known as Hamburger Hill, the site of a battle in 1969 that killed about 400 U.S. soldiers and prompted public outrage.

In the book, Newhall credits Blevins with saving his life on the hill.

After reading the memoir in April 2016, Johnson went to Blevins' page on the virtual wall, a website run by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. He

described the passage about Blevins and asked anyone who may know more about the situation to come forward. He wrote that Newhall was attempting to have Blevins awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest service award in the Army.

Two men, Ron Christian and Greg DeLaurentis, answered. Like Newhall, DeLaurentis said Blevins saved his life.

In the following months, the men — Johnson in Delaware, Christian in Philadelphia and DeLaurentis in Brooklyn, N.Y. — regularly communicated through email and conference calls. They collected witness statements and a petition with about 100 signatures, and acquired the Army's investigation report that determined Blevins was killed in action. DeLaurentis shared a letter he wrote his parents, describing the day Blevins died. They combined everything into a packet and sent it to President Donald Trump, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Penn., Sen. Bob Casey Jr., D-Penn., and oth-

ers, requesting an investigation to award Blevins the Medal of Honor.

Johnson is aware it could take years, he said, and their efforts may result in a lesser award — but they wanted to try.

"We thought it was the right thing to do," DeLaurentis said. "He saved my life and the lives of other people, and he did it completely selflessly. That's what, I think, distinguishes him from other people."

SEE EDISON ON PAGE 12

VETERANS

Germans, Americans mark Veterans Day in Europe

By DAN STOUTAMIRE
Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — One hundred years after U.S. troops entered Europe as part of the Allied Expeditionary Force in World War I, and 99 years after an armistice ended that war, U.S. troops still on the Continent paid tribute to those who have served with a ceremony Thursday in Wiesbaden.

Germans, other allied officers and civilian employees joined in the observance, held on Clay Kaserne in Wiesbaden, home to U.S. Army Europe headquarters. Starting in the afternoon and with the German late au-

turn sun quickly receding, the ceremony featured the lowering of U.S. and German flags and the firing of a ceremonial blank artillery round.

Brig. Gen. Kate Leahy, USA-REUR deputy commanding general for mobilization and reserve affairs, said that even though nearly a century has passed between that armistice and the present, many things remain constant.

"Then, as now, soldiers served alongside each other as comrades in arms," she said. "Then, as now, U.S. forces and allies and partners worked to ensure a Europe that is free, prosperous and at peace."

That peace following the so-called "Great War" was short-lived. An even more destructive war followed only a year after Veterans' Day, then called Armistice Day, became an official federal holiday in 1938.

Leahy quoted Gen. Mark Clark, who fought in both world wars, at the conclusion of her remarks:

"If ever proof were needed that we fought for a cause and not for conquest, it can be found in these cemeteries. All we asked for was enough soil in which to bury our gallant dead."

stoutamire.dan@stripes.com
Twitter: @DKS_Stripes



DAN STOUTAMIRE/Stars and Stripes

Members of the 529th Military Police Company Salute Battery salute during retreat after firing their cannons at a Veterans Day observance at Clay Kaserne in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Edison: Many who served didn't know of school's significant losses until years later

FROM PAGE 11

Newhall wrote in his book that Blevins ended up in Vietnam after he'd been accused by Philadelphia police of stealing hubcaps.

When they spoke of the future, Christian said, Blevins told him he wanted to be a mechanic. He met Blevins when he volunteered to leave his artillery gun crew and carry Christian's radio. They were both from Philadelphia and planned to reunite when they got back home. Blevins used to show off the radio of his wife, Christian recalled. He also had a young daughter.

Christian was away on R&R when Blevins volunteered for another assignment, this time to be a forward observer for Newhall's company on what Newhall described in his witness statement as a "highly dangerous" assault on a hill in the Ashau Valley that was defended by North Vietnamese troops.

At the time, Blevins' tour was scheduled to end in a matter of days.

DeLaurentis was also on the assignment. He, Blevins and a few others became quick friends, DeLaurentis said. Like Christian, he described Blevins as funny and courageous, with a "great spirit."

It was a three-day assault, and Blevins was the only soldier in the company to participate every day, Newhall wrote. On the first day, Aug. 14, 1968, Blevins repeatedly went into harm's way to direct airstrikes and cover fellow soldiers with small-arms fire. Newhall was wounded and didn't return for the rest of the assault, but DeLaurentis was there with Blevins the following two days, he said.

DeLaurentis wrote in his witness statement that the company was ordered to withdraw on Aug. 16, but he and four others were stuck under fire. Blevins, though wounded in the leg, stayed on the hill and continued to call in airstrikes for the men.

"His decision to stay cost him his life," DeLaurentis wrote.

Blevins' body wasn't immediately recovered, but an Army investigation board determined — after speaking to DeLaurentis, as well as others who fought on the hill — that Blevins had been shot in the head and killed. He was 22.

Newhall submitted paperwork at the

"I think it needs to be passed onto the kids. A lot of them don't even know. They need to know exactly what they're part of, that being a student at Thomas Edison High School comes with a heavy legacy."

Gerald Jones
Marine Corps veteran
and 1965 Edison graduate

time to award Blevins the Medal of Honor. After Blevins died, DeLaurentis wrote a 16-page letter to his parents about the assault.

"I am fine physically, but mentally I am distressed and as depressed as one can be," he started the letter. "You see, two days ago I lost two of the best buddies a guy could have."

He went on to tell his parents about Blevins' death, about he and the remaining soldiers' fear they'd die if they tried to carry the bodies down, and about signing the documents for Blevins' Medal of Honor.

Every year for a long time, DeLaurentis looked through the posts on Blevins' page of the virtual wall, he said. This past May marked his and Christian's first visit to Edison High School.

"The 64 kids who died, that's a big number," Christian said. "I don't even understand it, how that could happen."

Bringing survivors together

There's some discrepancy between the school's tally of the dead and what's officially recognized. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund acknowledges 54 former students of Edison High School were killed in Vietnam. Over time, though, the school added more names of former students who returned from the war but died

of injuries sustained there.

Many past students who survived Vietnam didn't know, until decades later, that Edison suffered significant losses, Jones said.

Jones was drafted into the Marines in 1968. He spent 12 months, 20 days in Vietnam, and when he returned to Philadelphia he had no idea the number of deaths of schoolmates at Edison had climbed into the dozens. It wasn't until the late 1980s that Jones, and a lot of the other guys, learned of the situation, he said.

"It took years for us to realize what had happened to Edison," Jones said. "When we came home, we were just dropped back into society. A lot of us had addictions or disabilities. Finding out about what had truly happened to a number of my classmates — that took years for it to come full circle."

He was one of about 35 former Edison students who were honored at the school May 26. They wore green-and-yellow caps, Edison's colors, with "Edison 64" stitched across the front.

This was Jones' sixth year returning to Edison. Now, most of his friends are survivors of Vietnam who attended the high school. Following the ceremony, they ate lunch on the school lawn and swapped stories.

Jones' biggest motivator in returning each year, he said, is the same as Johnson's — to make sure the school's history isn't forgotten.

"I think it needs to be passed onto the kids. A lot of them don't even know," Jones said. "They need to know exactly what they're part of, that being a student at Thomas Edison High School comes with a heavy legacy."

Search for closure

Viscusi went into Edison High School on May 26 with a specific purpose — to learn more about the men and women who died next to him in Vietnam and to offer his family some words of comfort.

He approached people in the school's packed main lobby that morning, introduced himself and asked for any information about Moore. But Moore's story wasn't as well-known as some of the others.

Viscusi and Moore were in Vietnam

only six weeks when their platoon was ambushed in a jungle in Quang Ngai province.

"He wanted to switch positions," Viscusi said. "He took my spot, and I took his. Ten minutes later, he got shot in the head, and I got shot in the leg."

Viscusi and others were medically evacuated. In the helicopter they took out of there, Moore's body was next to him. "He was lying right by me, and all I did was cry for him," he said. "I was 21 years old; he was 19. What did we know?"

Six weeks wasn't long, and he knew little about Moore. He wanted to be a carpenter, Viscusi said, and he was a polite guy.

Twenty-five years after his death, Viscusi visited the Vietnam Wall and made a rubbing of Moore's name that he keeps with the rest of his things from the war. When the 50th anniversary came, he woke up one day and told his wife that he was ready to go to Philadelphia.

"She said, 'I've been waiting for you to say that for the last 50 years,'" he said. "It's not easy, but I'm here."

Later in the day, he met a classmate of Moore's who knew him. He was a deacon, and he listened to Viscusi's story. It wasn't a relative, Viscusi said, but "it made me feel good."

Johnson had spent a few hours with Viscusi and his wife before, and told them the story of the 64 — that Moore was part of a bigger story.

Johnson doesn't think he'll organize the ceremony for many more years, but he'll help enough to ensure it continues. There's a community that expects it now. There are more stories to tell, he said, and more opportunities for some closure, like Viscusi found.

"Fifty years from now, this building may be torn down and another Edison built somewhere else," Johnson said. "But there will always be that bond, that connection that can never be severed."

"There has to be dedicated individuals who will see that our mission to recognize these guys continues, regardless of the years, the circumstances, the principals, students, staff. It doesn't matter. These guys died for us; they represent us."

wentling.nikki@stripes.com
Twitter: @nikkiwentling

NATION

Most student loan fraud claims involve for-profits

By MARIA DANILOVA
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Students who attended for-profit colleges filed more than 98 percent of the requests for student loan forgiveness alleging fraud by their schools, according to an analysis of Education Department data published Thursday.

The study by The Century Foundation represents the most thorough analysis to date of the nearly 100,000 loan forgiveness claims known as borrower defense received by the agency over the past two decades and paints an alarming picture of the state of for-profit higher education in America.

The report comes as Education Secretary Betsy DeVos faces criticism for erasing two Obama-era regulations that would have added protections for students. Review of tens of thousands of claims has stalled and The Associated Press reported last month that the department now is considering abandoning the practice of full loan cancellation in favor of partial forgive-

ness. Student advocates point to the Trump administration's ties to the for-profit industry and accuse DeVos of putting industry over students.

The study found "a disproportionate concentration of predatory behavior among for-profit colleges" that raises "serious concerns about the federal government's current approach to providing relief to students who have been defrauded and misled."

The Education Department did not respond to a request for comment.

Of the more than 98,800 complaints received by the department as of mid-August, 98.6 percent came from students at for-profit schools, while only 1.4 percent of them were filed by those who attended nonprofit institutions. For-profit schools account for 10 percent of national enrollment and 18 percent of federal student debt, according to government data.

More than 75,000, or 76 percent, of claims came from students who attended the now-shuttered Corinthian schools, followed by more than 7,300 students from the ITT Technical Institute chain, as well

as students from the American Career Institute, Education Management Corp. and others. The Century Foundation received the data through a Freedom of Information Act request.

Steve Gunderson, president of Career Education Colleges and Universities, the industry lobbying group, dismissed the report as an attack on the industry. He suggested that the Obama administration was to blame for the influx of borrower-defense claims from for-profit college students.

For-profit colleges expanded dramatically over the past two decades, with enrollment rising from around 230,000 in the early 1990s to a record 2 million in 2010. They recruited aggressively, targeting nontraditional students — usually older people who had jobs and could only study part-time. They also focused heavily on women, people of color and veterans. But after graduating, many students struggled to find jobs that were promised to them or to transfer credits to other schools, leading to massive student loan defaults. A 2010 government study found that all of the 15

for-profit colleges evaluated by undercover agents made deceptive statements to prospective students and four of them encouraged fraudulent practices.

The Obama administration cracked down hard on for-profit colleges, pressuring Corinthian and ITT to close and approved at least \$655 million in loan cancellations from those chains in recent years. At the same time, the administration also passed revisions to the borrower defense regulation and to another similar rule, known as gainful employment, with the aim of increasing students' protections.

DeVos moved to dismantle or stall those provisions. There's now a backlog of 87,000 complaints that haven't been ruled on. DeVos said she intends to fight fraud but believes the Obama revisions were written too broadly and could allow for unsubstantiated claims.

According to Tariq Habash, one of the authors of the Century report, for-profits "are financially motivated to maximize their profits; they have conflicting interests and one will always win over the other."

Obama causes frenzy at Chicago courthouse, isn't selected for jury

By DON BABWIN
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Former President Barack Obama, free of a job that forced him to move to Washington for eight years, showed up to a downtown Chicago courthouse for jury duty Wednesday morning. Then he heard the words most prospective jurors pray for: You're dismissed.

The 44th president's motorcade — considerably shorter than the one when he lived in the White House — left his home in the Kenwood neighborhood on the city's South Side and arrived at the Richard J. Daley Center shortly after 10 a.m.

Obama — wearing a dark sport coat and dress shirt but without a tie — waved to people who gathered outside.

Shortly before noon, Cook County Chief Judge Timothy Evans told reporters that the former president had not been selected for jury duty. But Obama was ready to serve if told to do so, Evans said.

In fact, Obama was also summoned in 2010 but that was during the period when he was the most powerful leader in the world, and he was able to postpone reporting, according to his spokeswoman, Katie Hill.

On Wednesday, Obama did get the prospective juror experience of sitting through a decades-old, 20-minute video in which Lester Holt — now the anchor of "NBC Nightly News" — but back then on local news — explained the ins and outs of jury duty.

Obama's experience was a bit different than the others who watched the video. When he arrived there was a feeding frenzy as crowds of people inside the

courthouse took photos and videos of the former president. As happens most days, would-be jurors brought books, but on Wednesday some people brought books Obama had authored in hopes he might sign them. He obliged them and posed for photographs, Evans said.

"Look at this. Did you know I was coming?" he asked one man who held a copy of Obama's "Dreams from My Father."

Thomas Pearson, who took the video and called the experience of shaking hands with Obama "the best thing I experienced in my entire life," said he wasn't going to show up for jury duty until his mother texted him that Obama would be there.

For his troubles, Obama is in line to receive \$17.20 — the daily rate of pay for performing this civic duty. Hill said the former president would donate it to Cook County.

Obama is the highest-ranking former public official to be called to jury duty in Chicago. But he is not the first former president to be called to jury duty. In 2015, former President George W. Bush answered the jury duty call in Dallas. He was not selected to sit on a jury. And in 2003, former President Bill Clinton reported for jury duty in federal court in New York City. He also was not selected.

Nor is Obama the first famous Chicago resident to be called to jury duty. In 2004, Oprah Winfrey was on a Chicago jury that convicted a man of murder. A decade later, Lawrence Tureaud, better known as Mr. T, showed up to a suburban Chicago courthouse for jury duty, sporting his usual mohawk, but without the gold chains for which he is known. Mr. T was not chosen to sit on a jury.



As Las Vegas police officer investigates at the scene of an accident between a self-driving shuttle and a truck in downtown Las Vegas on Wednesday.

ERIK VANDUZZO, LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL/AP

Semi-truck driver crashes into self-operating shuttle bus

By REGINA GARCIA CANO
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The robots won this one.

A driverless shuttle bus was involved in a minor crash with a semi-truck less than two hours after it made its debut on Las Vegas streets Wednesday in front of cameras and celebrities.

The human behind the wheel of the truck was at fault, police said.

Las Vegas police officer Adam Ocampo-Gomez said the semi-truck's driver was cited for illegal backing. No injuries were reported.

"The shuttle did what it was supposed to do, in that it's (sic) sensors registered the truck and the shuttle stopped to avoid the accident," the city said in a statement. "Unfortunately the deliv-

ery truck did not stop and grazed the front fender of the shuttle.

Had the truck had the same sensing equipment that the shuttle has the accident would have been avoided."

The oval-shaped shuttle that can transport up to 12 people has an attendant and computer monitor, but no steering wheel and no brake pedals. It uses GPS, electronic curb sensors and other technology to make its way. It was developed by the French company Navya and was tested in January in Las Vegas.

At the unveiling ceremony, officials promoted it as the nation's first self-driving shuttle pilot project geared toward the public.

Before the crash, dozens of people had lined up to get a free trip on a 0.6-mile loop in downtown Las Vegas. City spokesman

Jace Radke said the shuttle took two more loops after the crash.

NASCAR driver Danica Patrick and magic duo Penn and Teller were among the first passengers.

The transportation company Keolis is operating the shuttle. Its vice president of mobility solutions, Maurice Bell, said the bus will scout through Las Vegas at no more than 15 mph. AAA Northern California, Nevada and Utah, which is sponsoring the one-year pilot project, expects that 250,000 people will use the shuttle.

Las Vegas resident Stacey Gray and her dog Socrates were among the first to board the bus Wednesday. She said the drive was so smooth that she couldn't tell she was in a car, but approaching the intersection made her a little nervous.



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NATION

Paul's neighbor pleads not guilty to assault charges

By **BRUCE SCHREINER**
Associated Press

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — U.S. Sen. Rand Paul's longtime neighbor pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges he assaulted the Kentucky Republican while Paul was mowing his lawn.

Rene Boucher only spoke to reply "yes sir" to a judge during a brief arraignment.

He showed no emotion and kept his head down. Boucher faces up

to a year in jail if convicted of fourth-degree assault.

Paul, who was not at the hearing, wrote on Twitter on Wednesday that he suffered six broken ribs and has excess fluid around his lungs. The injuries have sidelined Paul from the Senate as he recovers at his home.

Warren County District Court Brent Potter set a pretrial court

date for Nov. 30. Boucher has been ordered to stay away from Paul and the senator's family.

Boucher's attorney has called the situation "a very regrettable dispute" that was "trivial." Boucher's attorney left the courtroom Thursday without speaking to reporters.

Paul and Boucher have been neighbors for 17 years in a gated

community.

Rob Porter, a close friend of the lawmaker, said this week that Paul doesn't know why he was attacked. Paul was mowing his yard and had stopped to remove a limb when Boucher tackled him from behind, Porter said. Paul was wearing ear protection and didn't hear Boucher coming, the friend said.



AUSTIN ANTHONY, (BOWLING GREEN, KY.)
DAILY NEWS/AP

Rene Boucher appears in court on Thursday for an arraignment hearing.

Woman, 94, frees herself from trunk

Associated Press

PHOENIX — A 94-year-old Phoenix woman freed herself from the trunk of her car hours after she was abducted from her condominium by a man who put her in the trunk, drove the car away and parked it at a shopping mall, police said Wednesday.

The woman's ordeal began early Tuesday when the man in his 30s forced his way into her home in the suburb of Scottsdale, said Sgt. Ben Hoster, a police spokesman.

The man tied the woman up, put her in the trunk of her four-door sedan and drove it a short distance to the Scottsdale Fashion Square mall, Hoster said.

The unidentified woman spent about seven hours in the trunk until she managed to get out. A passer-by saw her and called 911.

Hoster would not say whether the woman knew her kidnapper, how she freed herself from the trunk or if anything was stolen during the abduction.

Brian Czupek, who lives in the same complex as the victim, was walking home from the mall Tuesday afternoon when he saw police vehicles in the parking lot and of ficers with the victim.

"I thought someone was getting busted for something. I didn't know it was a kidnapping," Czupek said.

Seattle's female mayor 1st in nearly a century

SEATTLE — The booming liberal city of Seattle will get its first female mayor since the 1920s after former U.S. Attorney Jenny Durkan defeated urban planner Cary Moon for the office left open by a sex abuse scandal.

Durkan maintained her 20-point lead Wednesday when a second batch of ballots was tabulated and released in the all mail-in election.

Durkan captured just over 60 percent of the votes while Moon tallied about 40 percent.

Seattle voters chose between Durkan and Moon to replace former Mayor Ed Murray, who resigned earlier this year amid accusations of sexual abuse.

From The Associated Press

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WORLD

Trump, Xi show united front despite differences

By JILL COLVIN
AND JONATHAN LEMIRE
Associated Press

BEIJING — President Donald Trump sought to present a united front with Chinese President Xi Jinping following two days of meetings Thursday, despite lingering differences over trade and North Korea.

On trade, Trump criticized the “very one-sided and unfair” trade relationship between the U.S. and China. But he stopped short of castigating Xi, saying he doesn’t blame the country for having taken advantage of the U.S. in the past.

Trump said China “must immediately address the unfair trade practices that drive” what he said is a “shockingly” large trade deficit, access, forced technology transfers and intellectual property theft. “But I don’t blame China,” he said. “After all, who can blame a country for being able to take advantage of another country for the benefit of its citizens?”

To applause, Trump said, “I give China great credit.”

His Secretary of State Rex Tillerson offered a blunter assessment of China’s trade surplus with the U.S., which in October widened by 12.2 percent from a year earlier, to \$26.6 billion. The total surplus with the U.S. for the first 10 months of the year was \$22.3 billion.

“I think the best way to characterize it is that while we appreciate the long hours and the effort that our Chinese counterparts have put into these trade discussions, quite frankly, in the grand scheme of a (\$300 billion) to \$500 billion trade deficit, the things that have been achieved are pret-



THOMAS PETER/AP

President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend a state dinner Thursday at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

ty small,” Tillerson told reporters in Beijing.

He said that, “in terms of really getting at some of the fundamental elements of why this imbalance exists, there is still a lot more work to do.”

Tillerson also acknowledged that there were differences on “tactics and the timing and how far to go with pressure” on North Korea. But he insisted that the two countries were on the same page.

“There is no disagreement on North Korea,” he said.

Trump’s and Tillerson’s comments came during Trump’s second and final day in China and after lengthy meetings with Xi. The day included announcements that the U.S. and China had signed agreements valued at more than \$250 billion for products including U.S.-made jet engines, auto parts, liquefied natural gas and beef.

Such contract signings are a fixture of foreign leaders’ visits to Beijing and are intended to

defuse foreign complaints about China’s trade policies.

Trump had made narrowing the multibillion-dollar U.S. trade deficit with China a priority for his administration. During the presidential campaign, he accused China of “raping our country” on trade and pledged to minimize the countries’ trade imbalance.

For his part, Xi promised a more open business environment for foreign companies in China and said his country was committed to further opening its economy to foreign investment.

“China will not close its doors,” he said, pledging that foreign companies in China, including American ones, would find the

market “more open, more transparent and more orderly.”

The U.S. and other trading partners have been pressing Beijing to give their companies more access to its state-dominated economy. But it remains unclear how far China will go to fulfill its pledges. Previous U.S. administrations have hailed market-opening promises only to be left disappointed.

North Korea remained a focus of the talks. Before arriving in China, Trump had delivered a stern message to Beijing, using an address in South Korea to call on China, North Korea’s biggest trade partner, to do more to confront and isolate the antagonistic nation. That included urging China to fully implement U.N. Security

Council resolutions aimed at depriving the North’s government of revenue for its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Trump on Thursday appeared far more conciliatory, thanking China for its efforts and saying he’d been encouraged by his conversations.

“China can fix this problem easily. And quickly. And I am calling on China and your great president to, hopefully, work on it very hard,” Trump said. “If he works on it hard it will happen.”

Before the meetings, China rolled out the red carpet for Trump, treating him to an elaborate welcome ceremony on the plaza outside the Great Hall of the People before the leaders turned to their private talks.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Thief doesn't get far in motorized store cart

AK FAIRBANKS—A man accused of stealing a motorized shopping cart from an Alaska grocery store didn't get very far or go very fast before his low-speed getaway attempt was foiled by police.

The battery-operated cart with a basket mounted in front of the handlebars has a top speed of 1.9 mph.

Authorities said Rondell Tony Chinuhuk, of Anchorage, is charged with felony theft for allegedly attempting to take the cart early Tuesday from a Safeway store in Fairbanks.

Police say they stopped Chinuhuk while he was crossing a thoroughfare following a 10-minute joyride that consisted mostly of trying to leave the expansive store parking lot.

Man: Untied shoelace led to Walmart gunfire

ME AUGUSTA—A violent struggle inside a Maine Walmart started with a comment over an untied shoelace and ended with gunfire, according to one of the men involved, but police say a death outside the store was unrelated.

Investigators allege Robert Potter, 31, pulled a gun on another customer during an argument Monday night at the Walmart in Augusta. They said the gun went off as the other man tried to disarm him. No one was hit.

Police said a woman apparently witnessed the fight and ran to the parking lot, where she suffered a medical emergency and died.

The other man involved in the fight, Kevin Roberge, told the Kennebec Journal the dispute started when he told Potter one of his boots was untied.

Viral photos of student lead to modeling job

NH PLYMOUTH—Two photographs of a New Hampshire college student that went viral on social media have led to a modeling job.

Vogue reported that Anok Yai has signed with Next Management just a couple of weeks after a photographer took photos of her for his Instagram account while she was at a homecoming event at Howard University in Washington.

Yai, 19, is a sophomore at Plymouth State University. Anok's family fled South Sudan and has lived in Manchester, N.H., since 2001.

The photos have gotten more than 19,000 likes. Yai said she heard from three modeling agencies.

The biochemistry student said she's always been interested in fashion and art, but modeling was a dream she didn't think would ever happen.

WWII vet, 93, scores upset election win

NJ TINTON FALLS—A 93-year-old World War II veteran upset an incumbent New Jersey mayor who was seek-



ELLEN F. O'CONNELL, HAZLETON (PA.) STANDARD-SPEAKER/AP

Changing seasons

After removing a Funfest banner from a pole along North Wyoming Street in Hazleton, Pa., on Wednesday, David Villano, an electrician with the city's Department of Public Works, replaces it with a snowflake as the city decorates for the upcoming Christmas season.

ing a second term.

Vito Perillo on Tuesday defeated Tinton Falls Mayor Gerald Turning in the nonpartisan municipal race.

Perillo told the Asbury Park Press he wore out two pairs of shoes campaigning door-to-door.

The U.S. Navy veteran decided to run following a pair of whistleblower lawsuits involving the police department that cost the borough a reported \$1.1 million in settlements.

Building that housed Navy barracks burns

ME EASTPORT—Authorities in Maine said a fire destroyed a historic building that once served as a Navy barracks in World War II.

Crews responded to the fire at the Eastport building around 1 p.m. Tuesday. Firefighters contained the blaze after two hours.

Authorities said the fire destroyed most of the building but no one was hurt.

Town assessor Robert Scott told the Bangor Daily News the building was built in the 1930s and housed laborers who worked on the Passamaquoddy Tidal Power Project. Scott says it was later used as a Navy barracks in World War II before it was converted into a commercial space.

Distillery helps troops go home for holidays

TN LYNCHBURG—With the holidays approaching, the Jack Daniel Distillery

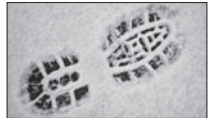
is working with a military support group to make sure military members and their families can celebrate with relatives.

For the seventh year, the distillery in Tennessee is teaming with the Armed Services YMCA for the "Operation Ride Home" campaign. The effort provides financial assistance to active-duty junior-enlisted military members and their families to travel home for the holidays.

Jack Daniel's donated \$100,000 to kick off the campaign. Officials behind the brand said the distillery is urging donations to help more servicemembers spend the holidays at home.

Since "Operation Ride Home" began, 5,767 people have been assisted. Military members have been able to travel to 47 states.

THE CENSUS



22 The number of miles an Oregon man walked in the snow for help after the car he and his father were riding in slid off the road during a hunting trip. Douglas County authorities said Wednesday that Danny Treskey Jr., 42, of Myrtle Creek was able to lead rescuers back to his father, who had remained in the car. The elder Treskey, 67, was found alert but cold in the car.

Parrot's screams of 'Help!' trigger 911 call

OR CLACKAMAS—A UPS deliveryman in Oregon who heard a woman's screams for help had his wife call 911, but when a deputy showed up it turned out the screamer was a parrot, not a woman.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported Tuesday that when Clackamas County Sheriff's Deputy Hayden Sanders showed up, all he found was Diego the Parrot.

The green-and-yellow bird was in good health and no humans were involved.

Hate crime charge urged in bodily fluids case

CT WEST HARTFORD The Connecticut NAACP wants a felony hate-crime charge filed against a white former college student accused of smearing body fluids on her black roommate's belongings.

Former University of Hartford student Brianna Brochu was charged Oct. 28 with misdemeanor criminal mischief and breach of peace. Police said last week they were seeking a hate crime charge, which has not been filed.

Police said Brochu claimed to have tampered with her roommate's belongings, including putting her toothbrush "where the sun doesn't shine" and rubbing used tampons on her backpack.

Burglary suspects held after fleeing in canoe

CA LAKE ELSINORE—Southern California authorities arrested two burglary suspects they say tried to make their getaway in a canoe.

The Riverside County Sheriff's Department said a Lake Elsinore resident heard glass breaking at a neighbor's property and saw someone running away.

Police in a sheriff's helicopter spotted two people get into a canoe and use shovels to paddle out into the lake.

When the men realized they'd been spotted, they paddled back to shore, pulled the canoe into some bushes and ran off.

Sheriff's deputies found the two local men and arrested them.

From wire reports

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Facebook: Send explicit photos to stop revenge porn

By Travis M. Andrews

The Washington Post

Would you voluntarily send Facebook nude photos of yourself? The company is insisting it needs them — for your own protection.

Let's say you have a spiteful ex who decides to embarrass you by posting a nude photo made in private. Facebook says if you send the photo to the company first, it will make sure it never shows up on its site.

But can you trust Facebook? The company says it won't store the photos but instead create a digital footprint so that its image-matching technology can prevent any future uploading of a copy of the photograph.

The one caveat is the original image file needs to be uploaded,

the Verge reported.

That's where the system can backfire, according to digital forensics expert Lesley Carhart, who said it's not that simple to completely delete a digital photograph.

"Yes, they're not storing a copy, but the image is still being transmitted and processed. Leaving forensic evidence in memory and potentially on disk," Carhart told Motherboard. "My specialty is digital forensics, and I literally recover deleted images from computer systems all day — off disk and out of system memory. It's not trivial to destroy all trace of files, including metadata and thumbnails."

Facebook is piloting the program in Australia in partnership with the country's Office of the eSafety Commissioner, a

government agency dedicated to online safety. Next, it'll be tested in the United States, Britain and Canada, the Times of London reported.

"It would be like sending yourself your image in email, but obviously this is a much safer, secure end-to-end way of sending the image without sending it through the ether," Australia's eSafety commissioner, Julie Inman Grant, told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. "They're not storing the image; they're storing the link and using artificial intelligence and other photo-matching technologies."

Carrie Goldberg, a New York-based lawyer who specializes in sexual privacy, told The Guardian she is "delighted" with the initiative and thinks it can help fight revenge porn.

"With its billions of users, Facebook is one place where many of our defenders agree because they can maximize the harm by broadcasting the nonconsensual porn to those most close to the victim," she said. "So this is impactful."

Revenge porn isn't uncommon in the United States. Four percent of internet users have fallen victim to it, and 10 percent of women under 30 have had someone threaten to post explicit photos of them online against their will, according to a 2016 study by Data & Society.

Earlier this year, for example, Facebook shut down a private group called Marines United, in which more than 30,000 members, many of them active-duty Marines, solicited and shared nude photos of their female colleagues.

The pilot program is a more advanced version of the system Facebook announced in April, in which the social media network would use image-matching technology to identify and block the uploading and sharing of photographs that had previously been reported and removed from the site.

The difference is for that the work, the photo needed to already be uploaded to Facebook. In the new system, Facebook says, users upload the photos themselves as a preventive measure.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Nov. 10)	\$1.1929
Dollar buys (Nov. 10)	69.8383
British pound (Nov. 10)	\$1.34
Japanese yen (Nov. 10)	111.00
South Korean won (Nov. 10)	1,068.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3780
British pound	\$1.3107
Canada (Dollar)	1.2721
China (Yuan)	6.6424
Denmark (Krone)	6.4029
Egypt (Pound)	17.6493
Euro	\$1.1621/0.8605
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7994
Hungary (Forint)	268.46
Israel (Shekel)	3.5167
Japan (Yen)	113.42
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3028
Norway (Krone)	8.1419
Philippines (Peso)	\$1.20
Poland (Zloty)	3.64
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7507
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3605
South Korea (Won)	1,117.44
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9957
Thailand (Baht)	33.09

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For non-local currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.00
Discount rate	1.75
Federal funds market rate	1.16
3-month bill	1.24
30-year bond	2.82

Walmart to offer Black Friday deals early online

Associated Press

BENTONVILLE, Ark. — Walmart hopes to tempt shoppers with online deals before Black Friday.

It's beginning some online deals Thursday and plans to offer most of its Black Friday deals

online starting at 12:01 a.m. ET on Thanksgiving. Stores will be open all day on Thanksgiving with deals available also at 6 p.m. local time. Walmart is adding a color-coded map of store departments on its circulars to make it easier for customers to find items.

Retailers are trying to strike a balance be-

tween online and in-store deals as shoppers use both.

Target also plans to offer Black Friday deals online starting Thanksgiving morning, but its stores won't open until 6 p.m. Best Buy stores will open at 5 p.m. on Thanksgiving and stay open until 1 a.m. Friday.

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$2.850	\$3.118	\$3.348	\$3.171
Change in price	+7.3 cents	+6.9 cents	+6.5 cents	+6.3 cents
Netherlands	--	\$3.458	\$3.606	\$3.487
Change in price	--	+13.1 cents	+13.7 cents	+6.3 cents
U.K.	--	\$3.064	\$3.293	\$3.116
Change in price	--	+6.9 cents	+6.5 cents	+6.3 cents
Azores	--	--	\$3.291	--
Change in price	--	--	+6.5 cents	--
Belgium	--	\$2.725	\$2.873	\$2.893
Change in price	--	No change	No change	No change
Turkey	--	--	\$3.169	\$2.992*
Change in price	--	--	+6.5 cents	+6.3 cents
Italy	\$3.785	--	--	\$3.747
Change in price	No change	--	--	No change

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	--	\$3.089	--	\$2.919
Change in price	--	+6.0 cents	--	+7.0 cents
Okunawa	\$2.599	--	--	\$2.919
Change in price	+7.0 cents	--	--	+7.0 cents
South Korea	\$2.629	\$2.899	\$3.129	\$2.949
Change in price	+7.0 cents	+7.0 cents	+7.0 cents	+6.0 cents
Guam	\$2.629**	\$2.899	\$3.129	--
Change in price	+8.0 cents	+7.0 cents	+7.0 cents	--

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of Nov. 11-17

MARKET WATCH

	Nov. 8, 2017
Dow Jones Industrials	6,13
	23,563.36
Nasdaq composite	21.34
	6,789.12
Standard & Poor's 500	3.74
	2,594.38
Russell 2000	2.64
	1,481.73

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

WEEKEND



'New Colossus'
a satisfying sequel
Video games, Page 26



Mystery train

Director/star Kenneth Branagh takes viewers on an old-fashioned romp in remake of 'Murder on the Orient Express'

Movies, Page 24

WEEKEND: GADGETS & CHARTS



Microsoft

Microsoft users: The Windows 10 Fall Creators Update is coming.

Update that operating system

By JIM ROSSMAN
The Dallas Morning News

Do you pay attention to the nagging popups to install updates to your computer's operating system?

Apple and Microsoft both have some pretty decent upgrades to their respective operating systems rolling out this fall and if your hardware can handle it, you really should upgrade.

Well, I'd say security is one of the big reasons. Hackers are constantly looking for ways to get into our computers to steal our personal data, and believe it or not, Apple and Microsoft spend millions of dollars each year to try and keep our systems secure.

As vulnerabilities are discovered, even by hackers, researchers, engineers or even the general public, Apple and Microsoft are busy creating patches to the system to close up the holes.

These operating system updates and patches cannot help keep your data safe if you don't apply them.

I'm occasionally asked to help friends and family members with their computers, and one of the first things I look at is how long it has been since they upgraded their system. One of my first questions is usually why they are behind on installing updates.

"Oh, that's been popping up for a while now, and I've just been clicking 'later.'"

I hear that a lot.

Window users should be using an antivirus program as well as keeping up with OS patches and upgrades.

Microsoft is rolling out its Windows 10 Fall Creators Update, and Apple has just released High Sierra, the annual Mac OS X update. Both of these are a pretty big deal.

You really should consider upgrading. Both companies try to make it as painless as possible, but sometimes problems do occur.

I had issues getting High Sierra installed on my Mac, but I didn't let those little problems keep me from getting the upgrade installed eventually.

Both Mac OS X and Windows 10 should show you a popup message when there is an update. If you click on the message, it should open the update install window.

If not, you'll find it in your system preferences or control panel. But before you upgrade, you really should have a full backup of your computer's hard drive. I can't stress this enough.

Mac users can find Apple's built-in backup program called Time Machine in their system preferences. You may also see a popup window appear when you plug in a new external hard drive asking if you'd like to use it as a Time Machine backup destination.

Windows 10 users can type Backup in their Windows search bar and find the backup preferences in the Update and Security control panel. There, you can specify a drive to use as a backup.

ON THE COVER: Kenneth Branagh stars as Agatha Christie's famous detective, Hercule Poirot, in "Murder on the Orient Express."

Fox MOVIES/TNS

GADGET WATCH

Latest equipment helps make photography a snap

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

The annual PhotoPlus Conference, the ultimate display of products for photography enthusiasts, was held recently at the Jacob Javits Center in New York City. There was no shortage of new products on display here are a few that caught my attention.

Band.it is a soft, ridged elastomer band that stretches over most interchangeable camera lenses and is universal to fit lenses from just about every manufacturer. It features extruded ridges on the exterior to provide a raised surface for better grip on the while the inside keeps a tight grip on the lens to hold it in place.

Online: camerabandit.com; \$25 for a single or \$45 for a band it zoom and focus grips

Digital Silver Imaging's new print hanger is an aluminum rail to display your images in an elegant, affordable way. Slide a pair of aluminum rails gently and securely onto the top and bottom of your print for an easy and attractive display.

They come in pairs ranging from 12 inches (\$18) up to 72 inches (\$92) wide and have a centered hanging hole pre-drilled on the back of the top hanger. You can hang a single print or any amount that fit.

Online: digitalsilverimaging.com

Frame Destination has an innovative guide, "How to Choose and Order the Perfect Frame for Your Metal Prints," which does just that.

The company designed the step-by-step guide to ensure customers an easy experience choosing the right metal (or wood) frame for their work. They also assure the work is displayed safely without needing glass or acrylic. And you see the exact prices with the features you add or remove.

Metal frames provide a timeless look to any metal print, which comes in several options. The guide explains each option with customized choices including the frame, mat board, finish and backing.

Online: framedestination.com

Illuminati Instrument Corp.'s Illuminati Smartphone-enabled wireless light and color meter lets photographers measure and control critical elements for producing images with proper exposure and color balance up to 80 feet away.

The Bluetooth meter measures ambient, continuous and strobe lighting at multiple locations in a scene and sends the results to your Android or Apple smartphone. With the readings, photographers can set light ratios with natural or artificial light, and get the right settings for a perfect exposure.



TNS photos

Band.it is a soft, ridged elastomer band that stretches over most interchangeable camera lenses to fit from most manufacturers.

Three AAA batteries keep it powered, and it works with any lighting, including daylight, fluorescent, strobes and tungsten. Multiple meters can be used for reading multiple light sources simultaneously.

Online: illuminatinstrumentcorp.com; available for pre-order on Indiegogo for \$249

LitraTorch is a pocket-sized versatile adventure photo and video light. Measuring just 1.5-by-1.5-by-1.65 inches, the aluminum-cased light is waterproof up to 30 feet, drop-proof with a military-grade construction (810G MIL SPEC rating) and mountable.

A one-touch operation has four levels for a light output of 100, 450 and 800 lumens of high-quality LED light. A strobe setting produces 2200 lumens of light. The S700K daylight color temperature is flicker free and has an ultra-wide beam angle.

A white diffuser, silicone sleeve, belt clip, GoPro finger mount and a USB charging cable are included for the built-in rechargeable Lithium Ion battery.

Online: litra.com; \$79.95

The Sirui A-100S aluminum travel tripod kit features a fully retractable dual stage center column, half turn twist-lock leg locks for quick and easy deployment with three leg angle positions giving photographers flexibility in all shooting environments.

It has a load capacity of 22 pounds, and the legs fold 180 degrees for a folded length of only 14 inches. If needed, it converts to a monopod, and the center column can be attached for increased height.

Online: sirui.com; \$139.99

The Sirui A-100S aluminum travel tripod kit gives photographers flexibility in all shooting environments.



ITUNES MUSIC

The top 10 songs and albums on iTunes for the week ending Nov. 2:

1. "Thunder," Imagine Dragons
2. "Perfect," Ed Sheeran
3. "Havana" (feat. Young Thug), Camila Cabello
4. "rockstar" (feat. 21 Savage), Post Malone
5. "MotorSport," Migos, Nicki Minaj & Cardi B
6. "Feel It Still," Portugal. The Man
7. "Wolves," Selena Gomez & Marshmello
8. "Love So Soft," Kelly Clarkson
9. "Too Good at Goodbyes," Sam Smith
10. "Bodak Yellow," Cardi B

— Compiled by AP

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The top 10 songs on Spotify through Nov. 2:

1. "rockstar," Post Malone
2. "Havana," Camila Cabello
3. "New Rules," Dua Lipa
4. "Wolves," Selena Gomez
5. "What Lovers Do" (feat. SZA), Maroon 5
6. "Dusk Till Dawn — Radio Edit," ZAYN
7. "Perfect," Ed Sheeran
8. "Too Good at Goodbyes," Sam Smith
9. "Silence," Marshmello
10. "1800-273-8255," Logic

— Compiled by Stars and Stripes

ITUNES MOVIES VIDEO GAMES

The top 10 movies on iTunes for the week ending Nov. 2:

1. "The Dark Tower"
2. "Wind River" [2017]
3. "War for the Planet of the Apes"
4. "Spider-Man: Homecoming"
5. "Baby Driver"
6. "Wonder Woman" [2017]
7. "The Emoji Movie"
8. "Atomic Blonde"
9. "Cars 3"
10. "Kidnap"

— Compiled by AP

Game Informer ranks the Top 10 games for November:

1. "Wolfenstein II: The New Colossus," Bethesda
2. "Middle-earth: Shadow of War," Warner Bros.
3. "Call of Duty: WWII," Activision Blizzard
4. "South Park: The Fractured But Whole," Ubisoft
5. "Assassin's Creed Origins," Ubisoft
6. "NBA 2K18," 2K Sports
7. "Destiny 2," Activision Blizzard
8. "FIFA 18," EA Sports
9. "Cuphead," StudioMDHR
10. "Forza Motorsport 7," Microsoft

— Compiled by TNS

APPS

The top paid iPhone apps for the week ending Nov. 2:

1. Minecraft, Mojang
2. Plague Inc., Ndemic Creations
3. Heads Up!, Warner Bros.
4. kirakira+, Kentaro Yama
5. Bloons TD 5, Ninjabiki
6. NBA 2K18, 2K
7. Schedule, HoSchedules
8. Afterlight 2, Afterlight Collective, Inc.
9. Try Wings, Andreas Illiger
10. Facetime, Lightsticks Ltd.

— Compiled by AP

WEEKEND

CHECK IT OUT

Events, entertainment and other ways to fill your free time

1

Miniseries revisits ambush in Baghdad

The fall TV season has delivered several military dramas, but none are as compelling as this eight-part miniseries. Based on a best-seller by journalist Martha Raddatz, it tells the story of "Black Sunday," when a small platoon of American soldiers was ambushed in Sadr City, Baghdad, in April 2004. The intimate saga swivels between the terror in Sadr City and the anxiousness felt by families on the homefront as they await news about their loved ones. The cast includes Michael Kelly, Jason Ritter, Jeremy Sisto, Kate Bosworth and Sarah Wayne Callies.

• **'The Long Road Home'** premieres Friday on AFN-Prime.

Jason Ritter and Kate Bosworth star in "The Long Road Home."

Courtesy of National Geographic



2

Rock the vote

For as long as there has been a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, there have been arguments about who should be inducted. Since 2012, the fans have had a say, with the top five vote-getters in the public poll forming one ballot

that is weighted equally with the other 800 or so that make up the rest of the Hall's electorate. So if you think enshrinement is long overdue for bands such as The Cars or Bon Jovi, head on over to the Hall's website and have your voice heard. Fans can cast one ballot a day through the end of voting on Dec. 5.



Courtesy of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame

• **Vote for your favorite nominees at tinyurl.com/y9mvxxrm.**

3

Drive-By Truckers' new track

Drive-By Truckers have always had a political undercurrent to their brand of Southern rock, but the undertones have been moving to the top of the mix in recent years. Their latest, "The Perilous Night," a commentary on America's acrimonious political climate, is the band's most politically charged offering yet.



Courtesy of Big Hassle Media

• **Hear 'The Perilous Night' at tinyurl.com/ycoouhnb.**

WEEKEND: MOVIES

PASSION PROJECT

Kenneth Branagh directs and stars in 'Murder on the Orient Express' remake

BY JOHN ANDERSON
Newsday

When he was an adolescent, Kenneth Branagh's mother started reading detective fiction, and one title in particular — "Murder on the Orient Express" — really caught his eye. "It's a great title," said the actor-director, 56. "So clear, so direct, so punchy. And confident. I remember reading it back then and really ripping through it."

By comparison, said Branagh — whose new adaptation of the 1934 Agatha Christie novel opens this weekend — it took him seven attempts and 25 years to get through "War and Peace." "Now, I'm not saying 'Murder on the Orient Express' is a better book," said Branagh, piously, "but Tolstoy deals with so many characters that are so hard to follow, and Agatha Christie has about 15 who are potentially central to the action and you know who everyone is."

What she does is a real juggling act" — and one that Branagh tries to emulate on screen in his highly stylized, visually lush adaptation set aboard a train bound from Istanbul to Paris, carrying a dozen potential murderers, and one nasty, ventilated corpse.

The movie features an international cast that includes Johnny Depp, Michelle Pfeiffer, Penelope Cruz, Judi Dench, Manuel Garcia-Rulfo and Branagh himself — as the elaborately mustachioed detective Hercule Poirot. It departs from both the book, which began with a recap of a crime Poirot had just solved, and the 1974 movie, which recaps a different crime — the one Christie based on the Lindbergh baby kidnapping, and which will be at the center of the slaying committed five years later, by a person or persons aboard the luxurious and, at one point, snowbound train.

Branagh's version, with its script by Michael Green ("Blade Runner 2049"), begins in Jerusalem, with Poirot in the middle of solving an antiquities theft. "I thought, 'Let's see Poirot in action. Start the movie with a dénouement,'" he said.

Branagh said, "so when he gets on the train we, the audience already knows who he is, and how he's smarter than the average bear."

Branagh said he loved the '74 film, "which was made by a master, Sidney Lumet, whom I had a chance to meet later in his life. He told me he wanted that movie to be a 'romp.' And that's fine. I wanted our version to be entertaining, but I also wanted it to be about the brooding undercurrent in Christie's novel, about the death of innocence. I needed to feel from everybody that we're not just in a romp, but a situation which could mean life or death for everyone on board."

As each variation on Poirot has made quite plain (including the David Suchet episodes on PBS' "Masterpiece Mystery!"), "Murder on the Orient Express" is not a vehicle that attracts, or even thrives, on what one would call understated acting.

"It's very easy to chew the scenery," laughed Josh Gad, who plays McQueen, secretary to Depp's tuggish Ratchett. "Especially when you're all in an intimate setting and there are so many people who could very well carry their own film, all working in conjunction to make an ensemble story." He said it all came down to "Kenneth" and his diligence in giving everyone their own moment in the film, and doing so "in a way that doesn't feel overwrought."

Leslie Odom Jr. agreed. The actor, who originated the Aaron Burr role in "Hamilton," plays Dr. Arbuthnot (originally Col. Arbuthnot), who is romantically involved with Daisy Ridley's Mary Debenham. The characters are in life-or-death circumstances and also, not everyone is who they appear to be," he said. "So it lends itself to some big performances

— which is why it attracts actors. There's an opportunity to have some fun with characters."

Odom's casting is untraditional; it's hard to recall a black actor in a Christie adaptation at all, much less in a romantic entanglement. The fact that Arbuthnot is a doctor in 1934, whose novelty someone remarks on, is explained in the dialogue, but the romance goes all but unmentioned. "It's definitely in there, though," Odom said; if you see the movie again, you understand their initial furtiveness. "People would have had opinions about that, and there's a little bit of danger there. I think Arbuthnot and Debenham are on their way somewhere, Amsterdam or Paris — somewhere they could make a life, have a family, a place they're going to feel safe."

No one is safe aboard the Orient Express, of course, once the murder is discovered and Poirot is on the case. Speaking of which, what is that hard-shell piece of luggage the detective carries around from train to station? Well, it seems that for all the mustache in "Murder on the Orient Express," there was going to be considerably more.

"We created this immense, swirling thing that Agatha Christie herself described as having a 'tortured splendor,'" Branagh said. "It was a real introduction to me — when you have a mustache that immense, the level of maintenance is really significant. So that little hand case he carries though the movie contains every conceivable pair of scissors, combs, curling tongs, wax, nostril clippers, hair clippers, ear-hair clippers and brushes for the mustaches. And we had scenes of Poirot in full grooming mode. But in the end, due to the ruthless demands of pacing, we didn't use it."

Agatha Christie's famous fictional creation Hercule Poirot has been depicted countless times on stage and onscreen. Kenneth Branagh's portrayal of the self-described "world's greatest detective" is more ruminative than most, considering the crime at hand with a combination of emotional investment and philosophical distance.

VANNEY LE CAER, INVISION/AP

Branagh takes audience on a mostly fun ride with 'Orient Express'

BY KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

Agatha Christie's 1934 mystery novel "Murder on the Orient Express" was memorably adapted to film in 1974, with Albert Finney playing the fastidious Belgian detective Hercule Poirot. Now, Sir Kenneth Branagh slips into Poirot's signature splendid mustache in a star-studded, big-budget remake, which he has also directed.

The way he tears into the performance, with an elegant vigor, it seems as though Branagh has been waiting his whole life to age into the role of Poirot, clearly relishing the blend of quirky meticulousness — one could call it obsessive-compulsiveness — and cheeky humor. He runs away with the picture, both as star and director, with lavish production design and an intoxicating and dazzling display of cinematic style.

The murder mystery set aboard a train from Istanbul to Calais is the kind of old-fashioned romp we don't often

see anymore, executed with a thoroughly modern sense of verve and rhythm. An opening prologue set in Jerusalem concerning a missing religious relic shows us Poirot's unique methods, as well as lays out the spritely, agile pace and warm humor that pervades Poirot's presence. Despite his dealings with dastardly doings, Poirot maintains a sense of dignity and cheer. He's truly funny — this is a man who wears an elaborate sleeping mask on his mustache and giggles incessantly at Dickens — but he does take crime very seriously.

Poirot's hoping for a vacation, but alas, that's not to be. When he runs into an old pal in Istanbul (while marveling over an array of breads — this man loves his baked goods), he secures passage aboard a luxury sleeper train, soon to become a crime scene. Through a series of dizzyingly complicated long shots, we're introduced to all of our main characters in the train station as they board, the characteristics and

clues flying fast and furiously.

As for the stars in "star-studded," we've got well-regarded favorites — Michelle Pfeiffer as a cougarish husband hunter, Judi Dench as a Russian princess, Penelope Cruz as a severe missionary, Willem Dafoe as an Austrian professor, and Johnny Depp, appropriately cast as a dirt bag gangster and obvious villain. Joining them are up-and-comers Daisy Ridley as an international goveness, Leslie Odom, Jr., as a noble doctor, Sergei Polunin and Lucy Boynton as a reclusive Count and Contessa, and Josh Gad as the gangster's secretary. When the murder is discovered, Poirot is pressed into duty, and all passengers become suspects.

Those who have read the book or know the original film will know the twists and turns of the mystery, but it's not worth spoiling for those who are new to the story. The pop and fizz of the opening, and the lush production are utterly transporting and will make you crave a croissant, a coupe of champagne and a long



20th Century Fox/AP

A lavish train ride unfolds into a stylish and suspenseful mystery in "Murder on the Orient Express," starring Johnny Depp.

trip on a luxury train through a wintry landscape.

But as the mystery deepens, reveals itself and grows darker, it becomes sad, delving into the aftermath of trauma and how it reveals itself. No longer a romp, all of the energy that Branagh starts out with drains like blood out of a corpse, leaving the film

ultimately cold to the touch. The beginning is a rollicking ride that will likely leave audiences craving more Christie, and here's hoping we do see Branagh return as Poirot — his rendition is too fun to be cut short.

"Murder on the Orient Express" is rated PG-13 for violence and thematic elements. Running time: 114 minutes.

WEEKEND: MOVIES



PARAMOUNT PICTURES/AP

Mel Gibson, from left, Mark Wahlberg, Will Ferrell and John Lithgow star in "Daddy's Home 2."

'Daddy's Home 2'

Some beats miss their mark in worthy sequel

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

"Daddy's Home 2" just might have to meet "A Bad Moms Christmas" outside in the parking lot to rumble over this turf war. Both films are seasonal romps about intergenerational love, acceptance and different parenting styles, but "Daddy's Home 2" slightly gets the edge. The surreal and silly sequel to the hit 2015 comedy skates on the well-known but still-appealing comic personas of stars Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg and their zany chemistry. Co-writer and director Sean Anders returns to helm the family comedy, and like the moms in "Bad Moms Christmas," "Daddy's Home 2" doubles down on the dads. While milquetoast sweetie stepdad Brad (Ferrell) managed to exert his sensitive, progressive influence on tough guy Dusty (Wahlberg), it's a whole new ballgame when their fathers come to town. John Lithgow is brilliantly cast as Brad's dad, Don, aka Pop Pop, a chatty retired mailman with cookies in his pocket. Then there's Dusty's father, Kurt (Mel Gibson), who goes by "El Padre" with the kids and is a womanizing, virulently macho astronaut who keeps trying to give his grandchildren guns for Christmas.

The secret sauce that makes the Daddy's Home films work is the strange brew of chemistry between Wahlberg and Ferrell. Wahlberg is his breathy, exasperated self, while Ferrell executes his naive oaf routine he does so well, lending his clumsy physicality to all manner of bodily injury, accidents and mishaps. Christmas, of course, lends itself well to the repeated power tool gags that Brad gets into, with snow blowers and lights and chainsaws and cellphone toasters.

With the added dads around, those antics become frantic. The mania produced by four warring dads, two moms and several precocious kids means the film almost never stops to breathe or let a bit run its full course. There's a genius thermostat dad joke that would have been that much funnier with more time, but the film zips through jokes and plot points to fit them all in.

Lithgow's character is so delightfully conceived and performed with many tiny perfect details that Don practically deserves a spinoff film. The soft underbelly of the Daddy's Home movies is celebrating softer male emotion and sensitivity, and Don is the perfect representation of how that makes people around him feel warm and happy. That progressive idea needs a foil, something to bump up against, which is represented by the toxic, macho swagger of Kurt. The casting of Gibson is pretty perfect for that, but you have to wonder if he's totally in on the joke.

Kurt is the villain of the film, encouraging violence between the dads and aggressive sexuality on little Dylan (Owen Vaccaro), who has his first crush. He gives obviously egregiously bad advice, urging his grandson to kiss the girl he likes and "smack her on the caboose." But the film wants to have it both ways, playing it as for laughs. The casual sexual harassment incites groans instead (Gibson's background doesn't help). While Brad lectures on the "friend zone," he manages to skip actually talking about consent.

"Daddy's Home 2" has its highs and lows. There are moments when it's deliciously silly and delightful, and others where it misses the mark, lacking the consistency of the first film. And while at times it feels like too many dads, they eventually all learn to "co-dad," in some kind of harmony.

"Daddy's Home 2" is rated PG-13 for suggestive material and some language. Running time: 100 minutes.

An unlikely co-star

'Daddy's Home 2' star Ferrell on Gibson's role in family film

By PETER SLENDORIO
New York Daily News

This family reunion comes with a dose of holiday hijinks—and some extra baggage.

Will Ferrell's new comedy, "Daddy's Home 2," centers around his overly earnest character Brad Whitaker co-existing with his wife's rough-and-tough ex-husband Dusty Mayron (played by Mark Wahlberg), until drama ensues when their respective fathers come to town for Christmas.

The film features a controversial cast addition in Mel Gibson, who stars in his first family comedy in over a decade after his infamous 2006 drunk-driving arrest and anti-Semitic rant, followed by audio of hateful tirades against an ex-girlfriend that was released four years later.

Gibson, who plays Dusty's bad-boy father Kurt in the new film, has mostly returned to Hollywood after a lengthy hiatus from mainstream moviemaking, notably starring in the 2014 thriller "The Expendables 3" and directing the Oscar-nominated war drama "Hacksaw Ridge" last year. Ferrell believes viewers will embrace seeing Gibson, 61, in a different type of role.

'He's going to open audiences' eyes with how great he is in comedy.'

Will Ferrell
on "Daddy's Home 2" co-star Mel Gibson

"He's going to open audiences' eyes with how great he is in comedy," Ferrell told the New York Daily News.

"I think this was kind of a fun thing for him to step outside, be on camera after having an absence for a while, and also (doing) a family, PG-13 comedy was something he hasn't really done," he said. "I think if he chooses to do more of that, he's going to be more than back."

The Daddy's Home sequel hits theaters a little under two years after the original, which introduced Ferrell's character as the goofy, excessively upbeat stepfather to Dusty's two children.

Ferrell—whose father is played by John Lithgow—didn't originally anticipate making a sequel, but after the success of "Daddy's Home," he decided he was on board as long as they came up with a

worthwhile storyline featuring the right characters.

"We really wanted to see someone come down the escalator like a Mel Gibson, and without even saying a word of dialogue, you knew, 'Oh, this is why Dusty acts the way he acts,'" Ferrell explains. "And the same with John and why I'm so touchy-feely, and open with my feelings, and positive parenting and things like that."

The movie is the latest co-starring vehicle for Ferrell and Wahlberg, who first delighted audiences as unlikely police partners in the 2009 comedy "The Other Guys" before revisiting their odd-couple dynamic in "Daddy's Home."

The secret to their rapport, Ferrell believes, stems from their abilities to make their characters feel as real as possible.

"When we first started of thinking of Mark for 'The Other Guys,' it just started making us laugh, the idea of Mark and I together," Ferrell said. "You wouldn't ever picture it. Him always—for the most part—playing the tough guy... up against my kind of plain, everyman thing I've been able to corner the market on."

"It's proven to work really well, and Mark is as adept a comedian as he is a dramatic actor."

Mel Gibson, left, marks his return to family comedy with "Daddy's Home 2," playing Mark Wahlberg's charismatic, manly man father. Will Ferrell, right, co-stars.

PARAMOUNT PICTURES/AP

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



Photos courtesy of MachineGames

HOLDING ITS OWN

An engaging and entertaining sequel, 'Wolfenstein II' puts a premium on all-out action

By MICHAEL S. DARNELL
Stars and Stripes

It's a strange world that we live in when a first-person shooter that features robot dogs and military installations on the planet Venus can be relevant to today's political landscape.

Yet, the marketing for "Wolfenstein II: The New Colossus," which heavily featured riffs on modern-day political slogans, managed to make a 35-year-old game series a political touchstone among the gaming community in 2017.

Pulling from current events to help sell your game is a genius move, from a marketing perspective.

News sites that normally don't involve themselves with the minutiae of the gaming industry brought the issue to light, exposing the game to people who otherwise wouldn't know of its existence.

But clever marketing does not a great game make. Could "Wolfenstein II" hold up on its own merits? That was the question I had coming into the game, even as impressed as we were with the game's predecessor.

I am quite happy to report that it does. Not only is the game a marked improvement over "The New Order" in nearly every way, it also manages to separate itself from its modern-day competitors in several key ways.

For starters, "Colossus" is a strictly single-player affair. As has been the case for more than a decade now, too many shooters have been pulled in too many directions, turning otherwise great games into bland messes that excite nobody. "Colossus," in contrast, is a laser-focused, narrative-driven action title.

Once again, players will step into the shoes of Nazi-killing terror William "B.J." Blaskowicz as he attempts to single-handedly eradicate the Third Reich. In the world of "Colossus," that's a tall order, considering the Nazis have taken over the world and most organized resistance has been crushed.

"What if the Nazis had won?" is a common enough theme for any number of books, television shows



and movies. It continues to work well in video games because as far as enemies go, sci-fi Nazis with laser guns and genocidal tendencies remain relatively guilt-free cannon fodder.

As the game unfolds, Blaskowicz travels across the U.S. in an attempt to unify the remaining pockets of resistance. The story is fine, and the themes of American determination and unification resonated with me. How the story was told, however, could have been handled better.

While every game has cutscenes, "Colossus" sort of abuses them as a storytelling device. While some of the world-building takes place in documents and newspapers you find scattered around each level, most of the story is told in well-done, but overly lengthy cutscenes.

One egregious example is a nearly 10-minute-long cutscene involving a surprise villainous cameo that ends up going exactly nowhere. MachineGames seemed a bit overly infatuated with its story at times, and some of the cutscenes just dragged the entire production down.

When you are in control of Blaskowicz, though, the game shines. Each of the game's 17 levels is intricately designed, with very few straightforward corridors to dutifully march down. Enemies

take advantage of the open-level design, finding flanking positions and using the geometry to circle around behind Blaskowicz. More than once I found myself impressed with how the levels allowed various tactics in any given scenario. Kudos to the level designers at MachineGames.

The gunplay is nearly as satisfying. With 11 types of guns to choose from, alongside his trusty hatchet of doom, Blaskowicz has plenty of weapons. Some of them, like a laser minigun of sorts, are pick-up and drop-off heavy weapons. Others, like my personal favorite — the assault rifle — are with you for the duration. Most of the weapons can be upgraded with various components like scopes and suppressors so you can tailor your favorites to your liking.

Part of what makes the combat so satisfying is that you never really have to worry about managing ammunition. Rounds are found everywhere, and

enemies drop even more ammo. The gameplay is geared toward heavy running-and-gunning, with enemies circling around and charging your position on the regular, so it's great that MachineGames ensured there are enough rounds that the game never turns into a resource management simulation.

Each weapon packs a decent punch, too. The impacts from (for example) the game's shotgun variant are weighty and send enemies flying backward. A shooter lives or dies by their enjoyment in combat, and while I enjoyed the story in "Colossus" well enough, I couldn't wait to get back to the shooting bits.

MachineGames even added some side missions that allow you to return to levels you've already cleared to hunt down especially evil Nazis — basically giving players levels of pure combat without any of that pesky story getting in the way.

Visually, the game is a treat, especially maxed on out PC. The bright, colorful areas like Roswell, N.M., are just as interesting to look at and explore as the bombed-out ruins of Nazi-controlled New York City. The character models are well-done and animation is solid, if not spectacular, across the board. At its worst, "Colossus" receives no complaints in the visual department; at its best, it's impressive and exciting to look at.

I did have some issues with the controls on the PC at first. The aim assistant always seemed too intent at moving to center a target, making it more of a struggle to pull off headshots than necessary. When I moved to mouse-and-keyboard, however, those issues (as expected) went away. If you have the option, I'd highly recommend the mouse over the controller for this one.

My personal playtime clocked in at 13 hours, which is more than long enough for a single-player shooter. The ending felt a little flat, but it succeeds in wrapping up the game well enough, while leaving plenty of room for the inevitable DLC and sequel.

I'd recommend this game to any fan of shooters, as this is easily one of the best single-player entries this year.

It does have a few show-stopping cutscenes, but for the most part, the game succeeds in creating a fun, engaging experience that puts a premium on all-out action.

Grade: B

Online: Wolfenstein.bethesda.net

A copy of this game was provided by the publisher for review purposes.

darnell.michael@stripes.com

Overall grade:

B

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WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe



The Baumwipfelfad in Bad Wildbad, Germany, offers a treetop walk through a scenic stretch of the Black Forest.

Treetop promenade

Path in Black Forest town offers sky-high vistas

BY GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

Treetops have hovered majestically and arrogantly over our heads for far too long. It's time we got even. Literally.

In the forest of southwestern Germany, humankind has fashioned a structure that has finally quelled the hubris of these brash treetops, reducing them to the humble level of the limbs we nudge aside and the roots we overstep. If the conquest of the tree wasn't already accomplished by clear-cutting them to

build our cities, stacking their corpses on the shelves of our hardware stores and slicing them thin for our printed information and entertainment, the Baumwipfelfad, or treetop path, has completed our task. A trip to and atop the Baumwipfelfad in Bad Wildbad, an attractive Black Forest town, is experienced in three phases.

The first is a short hike from the parking lot to the entrance of the treetop walkway. This provides a helpful surface-level look at the trees to be transcended.

The second is the stroll



Photos courtesy of Jackie Broome

A spiral observation tower at the end of the Baumwipfelfad treetop walk looks as if it was fashioned out of the wooden and metal debris typically thrown around by a tornado.

through the treetops along an elevated wooden path, offering precarious views of the ground below and the seemingly endless forest all around. The walkway, even when it forks into playground-style chain and rope detours, feels reliably sturdy underfoot. But it's prone to occasional shifts and sways, as if to remind its occupants of their precarious situation.

Any visitor already unsettled at this point would do well to

avoid the third phase of the Baumwipfelfad.

At the end of the walkway rises an observation tower that looks as if it was neatly fashioned out of the wooden and metal debris typically thrown around by a tornado. The tower's spiral path expands ever farther outward even as it climbs higher. The top offers undisturbed, views in all directions, most notably down. After descending the tower

—there's a metal slide down the middle, but it's closed from November through March — the relatively tame fourth phase of the Baumwipfelfad experience begins. With feet on solid earth, visitors hike at ground level back to the parking lot, regarding the forest from a more familiar vantage point and casting satisfied upward glances at the conquered treetops overhead.

broome.gregory@stripes.com
Twitter: @broomestripes

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Baumwipfelfad Schwarzwald is located at Peter-Liebig-Weg 16, Bad Wildbad, Germany.

TIMES

Open at 9:30 a.m. daily; closes at 4 p.m. from November through March, at 6 p.m. in April and October and at 7 p.m. from May through September.

COSTS

Entry to the walkway and observation tower is 9.50 euros (about \$11) for adults, 7.50 euros for children under age 15 and free

for children under 6. A family ticket is available for 19.50 euros. The tower slide, when open, costs 2 euros per ride and is unavailable for children under 6.

FOOD

There are a few restaurants located around the entrance and observation tower. Plenty more options await in downtown Bad Wildbad.

INFORMATION

Comprehensive information is available in English at baumwipfelfad-schwarzwald.de.

— Gregory Broome



Those who reach the observation tower are rewarded with views over the woodlands of the Black Forest.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Savor the flavors of France's market days

France is a cultural bouillabaisse that surprises travelers with its varied, complex flavors. To experience the tasty and fragrant wonders of its edible diversity, head to a street market. No single "sightseeing" activity better connects you to the French preoccupation with fresh products and their strong ties to the soil.

Markets combine products from area farmers and artisans and offer a mind-boggling array of choices, from the perishable (produce, meats, cheeses, breads and pastries) to the nonperishable (kitchen wares, clothing, brightly colored linens and pottery). But more than just a place to shop, markets are a window into how the French relate to each other.

Most markets take place once a week in the town's main square; larger markets spill into nearby streets. Usually, the bigger the market, the greater the selection — particularly of nonperishable goods. Bigger towns (such as the Dordogne's Sarlat-la-Caneda, Burgundy's Beaune, and Arles, in Provence) may have two weekly markets. The biggest market days are usually on weekends.

It's a joy to assemble picnics at an open-air market. Most perishable items are sold directly from the producers — no middlemen, no credit cards, just really fresh produce (du pays means "grown locally"). Most vendors follow a weekly circuit of markets, showing up in the same spot every week, year in and year out. Notice how much fun they have chatting with their customers and one another.

Markets begin at about 8 a.m., with setup commencing in the predawn hours.

They usually end by 1 p.m. — in time for lunch, allowing the town to reclaim its streets and squares. Wares are displayed with pride. Generally, the rule is "don't touch" — instead, point and let the vendor serve you. If self-serve is allowed, the seller will hand you a biodegradable bag.



Rick Steves

Many vendors speak enough English to assist you in your selection.

Displays shift with the seasons. In April and May, look for asparagus (green, purple or the prized white). In late spring, shop for strawberries. Soon after, you'll see cherries

and other stone fruits, plus the famously sweet Cavaillon melons (resembling tiny cantaloupes). From July through September, vegetables come straight from the open fields. In the fall, you'll see stands selling game birds, other beasts of the hunt, and a glorious array of wild mushrooms. After November and throughout the winter, look for little black truffles (or big ones, depending on your wallet size). Truffles preserved and sealed in jars can safely be brought back to the U.S. and make great gifts.

For more immediate consumption in any season, look for local cheeses. These can range from very fresh (aged one day) to aged for weeks or months. The better the cheese, the more dried and shrunken



French market vendors take great pride in their produce, such as these organic carrots at St. Remy de Provence.

Courtesy of ricksteves.com

it looks. Some may even be speckled with edible mold. Cheeses come in many shapes (round, logs, pyramids) and various sizes (from single-bite mouthfuls to wheels that could feed you for several meals). Some are sprinkled with herbs or spices. Others are more elaborately adorned, such as those rolled in ash or wrapped in leaves.

After perusing the cheese, move on to the usually huge selection of sausages (many also rolled in herbs or spices). Samples are usually free — try the boar (sanglier). Be on the lookout for locally produced wines and ciders (tastings are free), and see if you can find samples of foie gras,

which is usually available in take-it-home tins. When teamed with a crusty baguette, these all make perfect picnic fare.

Market day is as important socially as it is commercially — it's a weekly chance for locals to get the current gossip. Dogs are tethered to cafe tables while friends exchange greetings. Tether yourself to a table and observe. It's bad form to be in a hurry on market day. Let the crowd set your pace.

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

Remember in November

Nov. 11 is a date with wildly varying significance depending on where you find yourself in Europe.

In the United Kingdom, it's Armistice Day, commemorating the end of the World War I and its fallen, as well as those who perished in more recent conflicts.

The second Sunday of November is always Remembrance Sunday (Nov. 12 this year). On this day, a National Service of Remembrance is held at The Cenotaph in Whitehall in London. The service is attended by members of the royal family, government and armed forces. It is also open to the public, who watch the ceremony from the sidewalk along Whitehall and Parliament Street. Whitehall opens to the public at 8 a.m.; attendees should not bring large bags and should allow ample time to clear security. Remembrance ceremonies also take place at The Imperial War Museum of London on both Nov. 11 and 12. <http://tinyurl.com/nwtey3>

As the site of three major WWI battles, the Belgian city of Ypres/Ieper is another place where extensive WWI commemorations are held. On Nov. 11, following services at local churches, the annual Poppy Parade marches forth from the Ypres CommemPLEIN at 10:15 a.m., followed by a wreath-laying



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler

ceremony by the Menin Gate. As space is limited, the ceremony is also shown on a big screen at the Grote Markt. For details and information about related events, see <http://tinyurl.com/yawzv93x>.

Nov. 11 is also celebrated across many parts of Europe as St. Martin's Day, in honor of St. Martin of Tours, a fourth-century Roman soldier-turned-saint known for splitting his cloak in two to share it with a beggar. In many countries, the day is associated with feasting on duck or goose; look for special menus in restaurants. In Germany, many communities hold celebrations geared toward very young children, who carry lanterns they've crafted out of paper and sing traditional songs. A man on horseback often portrays the saint. The idyllic village of St. Martin along the German Wine Road complements its festivities with a wine fest Nov. 11 and 12.

<http://sankt-martin.de/home/feste/martinus-weinfest>

In regions with a carnival tradition, 11:11 a.m. on Nov. 11 is considered the official start of the "fifth season," or the period in which carnival is celebrated. Festivities get underway from that hour in the German cities of Cologne (Heumarkt); Dueseldorf (Rathausvorplatz) and Mainz (Schillerplatz). Maas-tricht, Netherlands (Vrijthof) is also the site of a lively party.

Documentary film fest

The International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), first held in 1988, is referred to by many sources as the largest film festival of its kind. Well over 200,000 viewers have attended recent editions of IDFA, and this year's program gives viewers more than 300 films to choose from.

IDFA's 38th edition, scheduled for Nov. 15-26, offers films in competition, regular and special programs. Fifteen films will compete to be named best feature-length documentary. "Best of Fests" includes documentaries that have caused a stir at international festivals over the past year.

The themed program "Shifting Perspectives: the Arab World" (Nov. 17-19) consists of 15 new and classic documentaries showing life in a range of Arab countries from the perspective of filmmakers from the region. The Amsterdam Human Rights



Courtesy of sankt-martin.de

The idyllic village of St. Martin along the German Wine Road complements its festivities for St. Martin's Day with a wine festival.

Award, new this year, will be bestowed on a film with strong cinematography best presenting the theme of human rights.

Tickets for screenings and events can be purchased on the IDFA website and at the festival box offices during the festival. The cost of a regular ticket is 10.50 euros (\$12.20); a variety of passes offer savings to those planning to attend several screenings; idfa.nl/en.

Dutch light festival

Each November, the Dutch city of Eindhoven chases away the gloom of the season with its Light Art Festival GLOW. The festival, now in its 12th year, is frequently listed among Europe's top festivals for light and illumination.

Some 30 artists from Europe and beyond create an expansive exhibition of artworks of light connected by a walking route stretching nearly four miles through the city center. Unique works created by engineering students and other young talents are shown at the former industrial estate known as the NRE. Each year's show is based around a theme: this year's artists were instructed to create a project based around the idea of the source of light.

GLOW runs Nov. 11-18. Entry is free. Viewing hours are from 6:30 p.m. daily to 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and to midnight Friday and Saturday. For details, see gloweindhoven.nl/en.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe



PHOTOS BY SCOTT WYLAND/Stars and Stripes

A heap of sautéed peppered mussels is a first course at Pruneto 1944 in the Posillipo neighborhood in Naples. The atmosphere is elegant but relaxed.

After Hours: Italy

By SCOTT WYLAND
Stars and Stripes

Pruneto 1944 serves both fine seafood and pizza, making it distinctly Italian.

It faces a cobblestone street on a hill overlooking the Bay of Naples, where the isles of Ischia and Capri can be seen in the distance.

The atmosphere is elegant but casual. The tables have white linen and wine glasses, and the waiter wears a black jacket and a tie. But you would feel comfortable there in jeans and a T-shirt.

Cooks in the back can be heard preparing the seafood while a man in the front quietly bakes pizza in a wood-fire oven. An array of wines are displayed on two shelves high on the wall.

It's a multi-course menu, which is common in Italy.

Appetizers include sautéed clams, ham and mozzarella, smoked tuna and swordfish, and peppered mussels. They range in price from four euros (\$4.60) to 14 euros (\$16.20).

I ordered the peppered mussels for eight euros (\$9.20) and received a hefty heap. They were tender and flavorful and the shells were easy to peel off.

The first course is mostly spaghetti, pastas and rice dishes with seafood, such as fish, lobster, clams and shrimp. Prices run from 10 to 20 euros.

The main seafood course jumps in price. The fresh catch I ordered would have been 40 euros if I had gotten the full 1 kilogram (2.2 pounds), but the waiter let me have a half portion for half the price.

The waiter de-boned the fish at my table while I watched. He plucked out the bones delicately to keep the tender soles intact and then buttered them. He



A server debones fish fillets for a diner at Pruneto 1944.

spoke English well and let me practice my rough Italian.

You can choose from a dozen types of pizza. Most cost 7-9 euros. For those not in the mood for seafood or pizza, there's a small selection of beef, ham and sausage as well as a few salads.

I plan to eat at Pruneto 1944 again and try the pizza. It will be fun to see the waiter's reaction when he learns I'm a resident, not a tourist. Few Americans eat here, which is too bad.

Wyland.scott@stripes.com
Twitter: @wylandstripes

PRUNETO

Address: Discesa Coroglio 102, Naples, Italy 80123
Parking: Streetside only.

Hours: 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. daily

Phone: (+39) 081 1867 6967

Website: pruneto.com. Reservations can be made online.

— Scott Wyland

There's bad gelato, and other food tips Italians will share

By KATHLEEN PURVIS
The Charlotte Observer

On a two-week vacation in Florence, Rome and the Ligurian coast region of small villages called the Cinque Terre (home of pesto, focaccia and fresh sardines), I managed to learn a thing or two. Even better: I learned new tips for cooking tips I already knew. For example:

Better pasta water

If you read much about cooking pasta, you already know about the magic of pasta water: After you cook pasta, save a little of the cooking water when you drain it, then add a splash when you stir together the sauce and pasta. The starchy water helps to bring pasta and sauce together into a creamy final dish.

• **New tip:** Before cooking the pasta, boil the water with a peeled potato until it's soft, then remove it and add the pasta to the water. That adds even more starch to thicken your sauce. The tour guide who told me that one says his mother also adds green beans to the water, just because she likes the way it tastes. You could toss the cooked potato, or use it for a batch of gnocchi.

Gentler pesto

Pesto in Tuscany and Liguria is much thicker, creamier and often lighter than the dark, chunky pesto many of us make in America. Several people told me they use a combination of Parmesan Reggiano and aged pecorino, a sheep's milk cheese that's even more prevalent than good ol' Parm, to get a creamy consistency.

• **New tip:** I ran into a lot of people who don't make pesto with garlic. They like a gentler version with less bite, and some people have trouble digesting garlic. So they just use basil, good parmesan, a little pecorino, pine nuts and olive oil.

Open wine differently

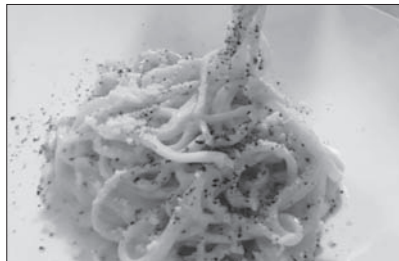
You know that metal wrapper around the top of a wine bottle, called the capsule? Wine nuts know the secret to getting the capsule off (besides risking your finger by using a little knife) is to simply pull it off: If you just grasp it tightly and turn it, you can usually get it to twist right off. (Two warnings: I can never get that to work on Australian wines, and if you're going to chill a white wine, pull the capsule off before you put it in the refrigerator. Cold contracts and makes the capsule tighter.)

• **New tip:** If you want to let your wine breath before you serve it, pull off the capsule, pull out the cork and then slide the capsule back over the open bottle. The little vent holes in the top of the capsule will act as a screen to keep any gnats or bugs out of your wine while it sits out. OK, it's not life-changing, but if you want that Tuscan-villa lunch vibe, it's a cute trick.

There's bad gelato

This is only helpful if you're going to Italy yourself. But if you do, skip those gelato bars with the big swirls piled up higher than a beehive hair-do. That's tourist gelato, aimed to catch your eye. To get those big swirls, they often pile fresh gelato on top, but they dig down into the center to scoop your serving, where it may be old and freezer burned.

• **New tip:** Look for gelato bars that keep their products in metal canisters with the lid on, or in smaller tubs that they pull out and replace with fresh batches. That's more likely to be the good stuff. (And if you're keeping score, my gelato samples included persimmon, torrone, buontalenti, honey and cinnamon, sour cherry, sweet cream, pistachio de Bronte and, yes, blue cheese and walnut. Which was spectacular, by the way.)



KATHLEEN PURVIS, CHARLOTTE OBSERVER/TNS

Cacio de pepe, Rome's beloved dish, is simply Parmesan, a little pecorino and lots of black pepper tossed with hot pasta.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

San Sebastian shines



PHOTOS BY TOM SHRODER/The Washington Post

The Castillo de la Mota overlooks the Casino Kursaal and Concha Bay. Concha Beach is said to be the most photographed and most visited beach in San Sebastian, Spain.

Spanish resort boasts a Paris-on-the beach feeling and delicious local food

BY TOM SHRODER

Special to The Washington Post

We only ended up in San Sebastian by happenstance. After committing to two weeks in southern France, my wife and I discovered that a college friend and his wife were planning a simultaneous two-week trip to Barcelona and parts south. To meet up, we needed a compromise destination. San Sebastian, rubbing up against the French border on the northwest Spanish coast, was an equal detour for both of us.

I had never been to Spain's Atlantic Coast, or to its northern Basque region. All I knew about San Sebastian came from a brief passage in the 1926 novel "The Sun Also Rises." The beach town was where Hemingway's antihero Jake Barnes retreated near the end of the book to recover from a prodigious week-long drunk and having his heart gored by the preternaturally promiscuous Lady Brett Ashley. Stoic as ever, he walks from the hotel to the beach and dives into the surf.

"I swam slowly, it seemed like a long swim with the high tide, and then pulled up on the raft and sat, dripping, on the boards that were becoming hot in the sun. I looked around at the bay, the old town, the casino, the line of trees along the promenade, and the big hotels with their white porches and gold-lettered names. Off on the right, almost closing the harbor, was a green hill with a castle. The raft rocked with the motion of the water. On the other side of the narrow gap

that led into the open sea was another high headland."

Ninety years on, the description perfectly captured the view that met us as we drove into the surprisingly big town. The only thing lacking, sadly, was the swimming raft, which had no doubt slipped its moorings several generations earlier.

We'd booked an Airbnb a block from the Kursaal Bridge over the Urumea River, an easy walk to the oldest part of the city. Within minutes, we were wandering through the heart of town, alternating narrow streets and wide boulevards lined with

immaculately preserved Belle Epoque sandstone block buildings, five and six stories tall, faced with filigreed wrought-iron balustrades.

The walkways were lined with shade trees, palms and art deco street lamps. A promenade curved through a park along 1,500 meters of white sand that swept along Concha Bay, where Jake Barnes had his swim. The bay curved in a near-perfect crescent — green hills rising at either end and an island in the middle. The immediate impression was Paris on the beach.

That's no accident, since the

Parisian plan inspired those who rebuilt the city in the 19th century, after it had been burned to the ground in the Napoleonic wars.

The city had grown gracefully, across the river and up the slopes of the hills to the east and west. It was full of flower-filled parks, historical sites and well-attended museums. Wandering down any of the narrow streets — many of them only for pedestrians — revealed an endless variety of bars, cafes, restaurants and storefronts ranging from tiny boutiques to large, mall-like chain stores. After noon and

before dinner (the Spanish version that begins at 8 or 9) the bars are overflowing with people and pintxos (pronounced peen-chos) — the Basque version of tapas, more varied and of higher quality than the typical Spanish small plates. Heavy on squid, shellfish, cheese, olives, eggs, Iberian ham and luscious sauces that I couldn't identify, pintxos were literally made to be washed down with one of the many craft beers flowing from the taps.

It can be a little confusing at first. The pintxos are arrayed along the bar like some medieval groaning board, and patrons wade into the crowd to indicate their selections, some of which need to be taken into the kitchen to cook. No tabs are kept; you pay at the end when you count up the plates and total what you had.

Pintxos range in price, generally from about two to six euros a plate. Essentially, it's an honor system. Oh yeah, the tradition is to throw the used napkins on the floor along with any empty shells. The bars with the dirtiest floors tend to be the bars with the best pintxos.

Locals eat a few pintxos, then go to a proper restaurant for their meal. If we'd done that, I would have needed to buy an extra seat on the flight home. But in San Sebastian, it definitely pays to leave some room for the restaurants. One of the city's claims to fame is having among the highest number of Michelin stars per square mile of any city in the world.

Our favorite place was Restaurante Saltxipi, just a few blocks from the beach and right at the



Fresh food and spectacular produce are a hallmark of San Sebastian cuisine.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

KNOW & GO

- Don't miss the mildly challenging six-mile hike at Mount Ulia's Ridge Trail. Maps of the trail can be found in San Sebastian's tourism office.
- For more information about San Sebastian, see sansebastianismo.com/en.

FROM PAGE 30

foot of Monte Ulia, which rises about 1,300 feet above the eastern edge of the city. The restaurant is in what must have once been a lovely family home, and as soon as we entered into a great room with a stone fireplace, we were treated like old friends.

The wait staff spoke Spanish and the ancient Basque tongue, which is unrelated to the Romance languages. But they eked out enough English to give us a friendly interest that seemed genuine and unrelated to tip-motivated ingratitude. The food was simple, the ingredients massively fresh and the Spanish wine delicious.

The next morning, we walked right past the restaurant on the way out of the city, went up the steep approach to Monte Ulia and took a six-mile hike along the mountain's ridge trail, overlooking the dazzling blue disc surrounding the steep-sided cliffs descending to the Bay of Biscay.

The flier we picked up in the tourism office said the trail was clearly marked, but either we somehow missed it or the trail markings were more aspirational than real. But no matter. We just kept the ocean to our left and climbed whatever path presented itself — from paved road to goat trail.

By noon, they had carried us to Ulia's highest spot (announced by a stone marker). There, unadorned by signage, were the stone ruins of what looked to have been a 19th-century fort. It offered a commanding view of the harbor, sweeping down to a promontory about 1,000 feet below us. Atop the promontory, at the verge of a jagged cliff dropping another 400 feet into the ocean, was the Cape Pata Light, a lighthouse complete with castlelike turrets.

We found ourselves alone except for the birds that soared on the thermals high above our heads. We sat on the steep slope swept by an ocean breeze and had our lunch of country bread and cheese and fruit, washed down with bottled water. Then we made our way down the back of the mountain on a steep path that became a paved road winding into the harbor of the fishing village of Pasaja.

The sun beat down as we descended the steep road, thankfully ending up at a cafe and bar near the harbor. We sat in the shade of an awning and let the sweat dry, washing away the dust with a few cold beers.

A bus stopped on the town's main street right in front of us, and we hopped on for the short ride back to San Sebastian. The driver set us down almost where we'd begun that morning, just in time for pintxos.

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GERMANY



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WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Pacific



The Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building offers sweeping views of Yoyogi Park and Meiji Shrine, Tokyo Dome, Tokyo Tower and Skytree, Roppongi Hills, Odaiba, Midtown Tower and more.

Hitting the heights

Government building offers views of Tokyo

By LEON COOK
Stars and Stripes

“Local municipal building” never comes to mind when I’m thinking of amazing travel destinations.

However, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building, which was the city’s tallest skyscraper until 2006, may change that.

The 48-story, nearly 800-foot-tall structure in the “skyscraper district” just west of Shinjuku Station splits into two towers on its 33rd floor.

Architect Kenzo Tange designed the building — which houses government offices for a metropolitan area that’s home to about 38 million people — to resemble a cross between a computer chip and a Gothic cathedral.

But what really makes the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building worth visiting are its twin observation galleries on the north and south towers’ 45th floors. They have a major advantage over the iconic Tokyo Tower and super-tall Tokyo Skytree: the views are free. Rather than paying the equivalent of \$35 per person to ascend the Skytree or about \$8 dollars at Tokyo Tower, visiting the government building’s observatories won’t cost you one red cent (or even a single, silver yen).

The building’s location offers sweeping views of Yoyogi Park and Meiji Shrine, Tokyo Dome, Tokyo Tower and Skytree, Roppongi Hills, Odaiba and Midtown Tower. In the right conditions, you might also get a glimpse of Mount Fuji to the west.

I’d recommend a daytime visit, because nighttime views just

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

The Oedo Line’s Tochomae Station is in the basement of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building. It’s a 10-minute walk from Shinjuku Station.

TIMES

Both observatories open at 9:30 a.m. The north observatory closes at 11 p.m. and the south observatory closes at 5:30 p.m.

COSTS

Free

FOOD

Both observatories offer a cafe, and there are more restaurants on the building’s bottom floor.

INFORMATION

metro.tokyo.jp/ENGLISH/OFFICES/observat.htm

— Leon Cook

aren’t as good.

You can peel yourself away from the amazing views at the windows, both the north and south observatories have cafes. I didn’t go to the north observatory, which also hosts a bar with live music; however, the one in the south observatory serves pancakes, crepes and waffles. The average price for an entree is 1,000 yen, or about \$9. The gift shop sells specialty



PHOTOS BY LEON COOK/Stars and Stripes

Although it has been dethroned as the city’s tallest structure, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building west of Shinjuku Station still offers incredible views from its twin observatories.

foods from every prefecture in Japan, along with badly translated descriptions of how some of them came to prominence.

The line to go up to the observation deck didn’t take very long, even with security guards checking our bags, but I stood in line to

leave for 10-15 minutes.

All in all, a visit to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building is well worth your time. The views are incredible, and you definitely can’t beat the price.

cook.leon@stripes.com
Twitter: @LeonCook12

For a video about the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building and its views, go to stripes.com/go/TMGB



WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Pacific



Above: Nearly every burger at Brozers' is topped with house barbecue sauce, which provides a subtle, smoky tang. Right: Brozers' menu includes a pastrami sandwich — a rarity in the Tokyo dining scene.



PHOTOS BY KAT BOUZA/Stars and Stripes

After Hours: Japan

By KAT BOUZA
Stars and Stripes

No western food import holds a higher place in the hearts — and stomachs — of Tokyo's gastronomy fiends than the humble hamburger. From the affordable classic Mus Burger to the high-end kuroge wagyu burger at Blacows, Tokyo has quickly become a top dining destination for hungry locals and travelers in search of all things beef and bun related.

However, no tour of Tokyo's thriving burger scene is complete without a stop (or two) at Brozers', consistently ranked as one of the best burger restaurants in the city.

This cozy retro-themed diner, which describes itself as a "hamburger restaurant overflowing with American taste," has been serving gourmet burgers in Tokyo's Nishi-Shinjuku district since mid-2000.

Every burger on Brozers' menu is built upon a singular culinary canvas: Crisp leaves of iceberg lettuce sit atop a thin layer of creamy Japanese mayonnaise. Several rings of raw onion and a single slice of a perfectly ripe tomato prop up a juicy, lean handmade patty. An expertly toasted bun holds it all in place — and nearly every burger is topped with a squeeze of Brozers' house barbecue sauce, which provides a subtle, smoky tang



No tour of Tokyo's thriving burger scene is complete without a stop at Brozers', which is consistently ranked as one of the best burger restaurants in the city. Much of its secret is in its crunchy bun.

and the perfect finishing touch.

The standout of Brozers' burgers is, somewhat surprisingly, the bun — a spongy and sweet sesame roll that somehow retains the crunch from a light toasting despite also being able to contain the inevitable mess a burger brings. Too many of Tokyo's gourmet burger options rely on low-quality buns, which usually result in a soggy, slippery disaster midway through the meal. Brozers' buns, however, manage to keep the patty and its toppings intact — something any burger fanatic knows is no small feat.

What Brozers' burgers lack in

size they make up for in flavor.

While many of Tokyo's burger offerings suffer from an overload of gimmicky, disparate toppings, Brozers' opts for a more understated approach that ensures the taste and texture of each ingredient isn't overpowered by others. Whether a customer opts for a simple hamburger (1,150 yen or about \$10) or an avocado bacon cheeseburger (1,600 or about \$14), the ratio of each topping is such that the first bite is as good as the last.

This isn't to say, however, that Brozers' doesn't venture into slightly more adventurous

BROZERS'

Location: 2-28-5 Nihonbashi Ningyocho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo. Accessible via the Tokyo Metro Chiyoda Line or Toei Asakusa Line at Ningyocho Station (3-minute walk) or the Toei Shinjuku Line at Hamacho Station (5-minute walk).

Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sundays and holidays. Lunch

at 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays. **Prices:** Basic burgers start at 1,150 yen (about \$10), while more creative options range from 1,350 to 2,000. Soft drinks (400 yen) and a variety of alcoholic beverages (500 yen to 680 yen) can be added to any meal.

Dress: Casual
Information: <http://brozers.co.jp>

— Kat Bouza

burger topping territory. Diners who visit during dinner hours can choose from a variety of less-common burger combinations, including the restaurant's signature offering, the Lot Burger — a behemoth featuring bacon, pineapple, a fried egg, barbecue sauce, teriyaki sauce and spicy chili sauce. (If one patty isn't enough, the Double Lot Burger should satisfy the appetite of even the hungriest of customers.)

Not in the mood for burgers? Both Brozers' lunch and dinner menus offer a variety of American comfort foods, from oversized chili dogs to triple-stacked club sandwiches — all served with the same meticulous attention to taste and presentation as Brozers' cornerstone dish.

American diners eager for a taste of home might be surprised to find a pastrami sandwich (1,150 yen) on the menu — a true rarity in the Tokyo dining scene, even in the city's more cosmopolitan neighborhoods. Although

it lacks the sandwich's traditional rye bread, the bold, peppery flavor of the thinly sliced pastrami makes Brozers' take a worthy homage to the iconic deli staple.

Like most Tokyo burger joints, Brozers' may leave diner's wallets a bit lighter at the end of the meal — so budget-conscious visitors looking for a burger fix should make plans to visit the restaurant on weekdays to take advantage of Brozers' lunch specials. Burgers and select menu items are slightly discounted compared with the dinner menu, and all items come with a side of fries.

Despite the price tag, Brozers' is an undeniable standout when compared with other burger restaurants at similar price points in the 23 wards. Sometimes, simple really is best — and no other burger in Tokyo embodies this sentiment more than Brozers' straightforward-yet-familiar take on classic American diner fare.

bouza.kat@stripes.com

STARS AND STRIPES
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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

FROM SHABBY



The June Motel

Above: Retro-chic feels right at home in the lobby of the June Motel in Prince Edward County, Ontario, Canada. Left: The Anvil Hotel in Jackson, Wyo., is the perfect place to warm up after skiing. These older motels have been updated.

to chic

Makeovers turn worn motels into hip, overnight sensations

By SARA CLEMENCE/Bloomberg News

Hotel design is often a process of addition, whether it's that perfect throw pillow, coffee-table books or a splash of texture on an accent wall.

But not when you're gutting a shabby 1930s motel.

"Most of our design process was about subtraction," said Liz Lambert, founder of the Austin-Texas based Bunkhouse Group, which in March unveiled its overhaul of the aged Austin Motel. They had to peel away layers of garden gnomes and tchotchkes that accumulated. Now the derelict inn is a cool-kid magnet just like its sister hotel, the celebrity-packed Saint Cecilia.

Hoteliers are turning downtrodden motels — national icons of sorts — into stylish, remarkably upscale hotels. The trend started a decade ago, according

to Mike Cahill, founder and chief executive officer of hospitality real estate firm HREC Investment Advisors. In the past couple of years it's been spurred by affordable property prices and a changing definition of luxury that emphasizes character over thread counts and square footage.

That doesn't make the business of renovating motels a no-brainer. In booming areas, it can be more cost-effective to tear down motels and build something larger from scratch. Cheap real estate can also translate to costly, time-consuming and controversial renovations, since the buildings are often seen as part of a community's local legacy. So why bother? For some, the challenges are worth the reward of creating a noteworthy hotel, contributing to the rebirth of an area and, they hope, profiting as a result. "It's like the ultimate in recycling," Cahill said.

Here are some standouts to book on your next trip.

Austin Motel

Austin, Texas

For years, hotelier Lambert had a crush on the 1930s-era Austin Motel and its neon sign. After her year-long makeover, the 41-room property marries minimalism with bursts of color and kitsch: lip-shaped telephones, colorful Voutsa wallpaper patterns and synchronized swimming performances for poolside entertainment.

"I think we preserved the spirit of the place," Lambert said. "And of course, we kept the sign." Rooms from \$125.

Nobu Ryokan

Malibu, Calif.

It wasn't the dated decor of the Casa Malibu Inn that prompted Oracle founder Larry Ellison to pay \$20 million for it. The motel was built right on coveted Carbon Beach — also called "Billionaire's Beach," thanks to the extravagant homes abutting it. After a total reinvention, the hotel reopened in June as part of Japanese chef Nobu Matsuhisa's fast-growing brand, with just 16 individually designed rooms. The style is refined and organic, with teak paneling, concrete fireplaces, handmade teak soaking tubs and linen-hued upholstery. There is a shared deck of ipe, or Brazilian walnut, wood and an oceanfront lap pool; the interior garden is in traditional Japanese style. From \$1,500.

The Drifter

New Orleans

The bones still say motel, but nothing else does at New Orleans' new Drifter hotel. "We had this dream to transform [the Drifter] into a destination," said co-owner Jayson Seidman, whose once-shabby 1956 motel is set in an unlikely area — an up-and-coming, industrial stretch once known

as a hotbed of drugs and prostitution. Seidman and his co-owners turned the parking lot into a tropical garden, removed the dirt that used to fill the swimming pool and added a lounge and coffee bar. The casual-cool result was launched this summer, with a buzzy cocktail hour scene. The rooms are simple, with gray walls and upholstery and honey-toned wood headboards. "We're playing the high-low game — we are a 1950s motel, but we have Aesop toiletries and really nice linens," Seidman said. From \$175.

The Elita Hotel

Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

It was supposed to be a lipstick renovation. But after new owners took over the Shell Motel, a half-block off the beach in Fort Lauderdale, they decided otherwise.

"We gutted it," said Pawel Plata, co-founder and manager of the Gzella Collection, which now includes three converted motels along a burgeoning corridor of the South Florida coast.

They replaced the Elita's wan yellow exterior with a graphic black-and-white facade. Out went brown tiled showers and pastel parrot prints; in came tinted glass bathroom doors and serene gray walls. But the highlight of the hotel, which opened in mid-2016, is the enclosed modern garden and pool. "It's just our oasis," Plata said. From \$134.

Anvil

Jackson, Wyo.

At the Anvil, even the bed frames make a statement. "They are a reflection not just of the fact that wrought-iron beds were a luxury in Jackson a hundred years ago," hotelier Erik Warner said, they also pay homage to the ruggedness of this ski resort-cum-cowboy town, south of Grand Teton National Park. Other statements: a beverage

program by New York cocktail outfit Death & Co., a trattoria led by Pok Pok alum Troy Furuta, and a top-notch concierge program that focuses on the local community. From \$195.

Sound View Greenport

Greenport, N.Y.

At this new gem on the North Fork, the shore is the star: All 55 rooms open onto a private, quarter-mile-long beach at the far eastern end of Long Island. Built in 1953 and redone by Eagle Point this year, the motel has rooms featuring shipal cedar walls, rope rugs and colorblocked quilts.

James Beard-winning chef Galen Zammar oversees its seafood-focused restaurant. Try the clams, fried in a buttermilk-saltines batter, and the lobster beignets. From \$205.

The June Motel

Prince Edward County, Ontario

Once you've been to Prince Edward County, it's hard not to go back: It has dozens of excellent wineries, Caribbean-like beaches, and tons of charming boutiques and restaurants, all within an easy drive of Toronto or Montreal. But it has little in the way of great hotels. So when a couple of Toronto friends came upon the "dingy" but structurally midcentury Sportsman Hotel, they saw great potential.

"Despite the popularity of the area, everyone seemed to struggle to find a place to stay," co-owner April Brown said. Now the 16-room property is an eclectic, boho-chic spot with pink doors, Solar chairs, and a Rosé Suite plastered in floral wallpaper, midway between the mysterious (but beautiful) Lake on the Mountain and the blink-and-you-miss-it town of Pictou. From \$119.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

BAR TOO FAR?

Explorers earn their drinks at hard-to-reach watering holes worldwide

By TIFFANY LEIGH
Bloomberg News

If you crave more than a generic corner pub or bar, don your explorer's hat and quench your thirst at these spots — which happen to be located in the farthest-flung corners of the world.

Should you make your way to these bar stools, you'll be rewarded with epic tales to share for the rest of your life.

Camp Kalahari, Botswana

Calling the bar at Camp Kalahari an "oasis" is fitting, as it is in the heart of Botswana's dry savanna. The safari outfitter is on Makgadikgadi Pans Game Reserve, where there is a large concentration of salt pans — vast deserts where little wildlife can endure extreme conditions of harsh winds and scorching heat. It's a place where "nothingness stretches as far as the eye can see," said Dave van Smeerdijk, a founder of the Natural Selection chain of lodges, of which Camp Kalahari is a member. Other areas feature such wildlife as wildebeest, zebras and flamingos.

SubSix, Maldives

This bar could certainly pass for the splashy digs of "The Little Mermaid." Enveloped in the beauty of marine life, this posh underwater restaurant and bar belongs to Niyama Private Islands Maldives on the island of Hulhulhu in the Maldives.

You get to the luxury resort via a 40-minute seaplane ride from Male International Airport. Once at Niyama, board a speedboat to the dock at SubSix, about 550 yards offshore, 10 to 15 minutes depending on how choppy the water is. Once there, descend a grand staircase 20 feet below sea level, pull up a seat at the clam-inspired SubSix Bar, and marvel at the majesty of aquatic life careening by. Although the menu of sips is extensive, it seems most appropriate to toast your arrival with a glass of bubbly.

The Old Forge, Scotland

Located in the village of Inverie on the Knoydart Peninsula in the Scottish Highlands, the Old Forge is Britain's most remote pub, and quite good, according to Peter Irvine's book "Scotland the Best." There are no roads to it; the nearest accessible town is Mallaig, itself a four-hour ride northwest of Glasgow.

Once in Mallaig, the only way to access the pub is via an 18-mile hike over a Highlands mountain pass or a seven-mile sea crossing. If you opt for the latter, don't be surprised if you encounter buzzards, red deer and gray seals along the coastline. Despite the numerous obstacles, visitors who rise to the challenge are rewarded generously with seafood feasts and local brews upon arriving.

The Irish Pub, Nepal

Before conquering Mount Everest, many first tamp down the knots in their stomachs with a pint at the local pub. Located in the sheepy town of Namche Bazaar, a Nepalese village built into a steep slope, the Irish Pub claims to be the world's highest altitude watering hole. Having braved shortness of breath, dizzying heights and extremely cold weather conditions, getting to the destination itself will make you reach for a pint.

Visitors must first fly into the cliff-side Lukla Airport, described by the *Historic Channel* as "the most dangerous airport in the world for over 20 years." They must then trek two days



Above: The bar at Camp Kalahari on the Makgadikgadi Pans Game Reserve in Botswana. Below left: The SubSix bar at Niyama Private Islands Maldives, on the island of Hulhulhu in the Maldives. Below right: A view of Adamstown, Pitcairn Island, the site of Christian's Café.



Niyama Maldives



The Old Forge

The village of Inverie on the Knoydart Peninsula in the Scottish Highlands.

across unsteady suspension bridges at heights of more than 11,000 feet.

Albatross Bar, Tristan da Cunha island

The journey to Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, a village considered the most remote on Earth, requires a week-long trip on a supply ship that leaves Capetown, South Africa, just 12 times a year. It's on the main island of Tristan Da Cunha, a British Overseas Territory in the far South Atlantic. The town is built on a rocky flat beside Queen Mary's Peak, an active volcano. It features one bar, the Albatross, which is a taproom inside the local common house, Prince Philip Hall.

Thirsty Camel Lodge, Mongolia

The vast, cold, and rocky landscape of the Gobi Desert, considered the world's fifth-largest, is home to the Thirsty Camel Bar. Located in South Gobi Province, the southernmost province in Mongolia, the bar is surrounded by such natural wonders as snow leopards, Gobi bears, desert basins and the Mongol Altai Mountain Range. Getting to lodge requires a 90-minute flight from the capital, Ulaanbaatar, to Dalanzadgad, on the edge of the Gobi Desert. From there, it's another 90-minute drive by off-road vehicle to reach the lodge in Gobi Gurvan-saikhan National Park.

Christian's Café, Pitcairn Island

Christian's Café is in Adamstown, the capital and sole settlement of the volcanic Pitcairn Islands archipelago in the South Pacific, between Australia and South America. Under the leadership of legendary mutineer Fletcher Christian, rebel sailors from the HMS Bounty settled on the rugged landscape in 1790, along with Tahitian companions. Hundreds of years ago, the town had a reputation as a village of violent drunks, but the island's residents (about 50) now keep to themselves. Their sole bar began serving alcohol in 2009, keeps minimal hours and is open only after 6:30 p.m. on Fridays.

There are no flights to Adamstown; you must come by boat, and resources are scarce.

Faraday Bar, Antarctica

You can make pals with the penguins neighboring this bar on an island five miles off the Antarctic Peninsula and surrounded by massive mountains, snow and sheets of ice. Once a British Antarctic expeditionary base dating to 1947, Vernadsky Research Base was purchased by Ukraine in 1996 for 1 British pound.

If you're not a scientist, you can get there through a tourism outfitter such as One Ocean Expeditions, which can make a pit stop at the base. Serving the base's rotating cast of scientists and staff, Faraday is considered the southernmost drinking hole in the world.

Lost Bar, Russia

It holds the reputation of being "the loneliest bar in the world" because, apparently, no one would want to visit it. Historically, the area existed as a stopover for reindeer herders in the 1920s and '30s. Today, a major contributing factor to a lack of tourists is likely the bone-chilling, deathly cold; the Lost Bar is in Oymyakon, Russia, known as the coldest inhabited town on Earth. You'll need to fly into the closest neighboring city, the regional capital of Yakutsk. From there, it is a two-day drive to Oymyakon, whose population is around 500. The small, no-frills bar is well-heated and stocks — what else? — plenty of vodka.

WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

Gord Downie was blessed with the chance to say goodbye, and he makes the most of that opportunity on "Introduce Yourself," a 23-song farewell to friends, family, bandmates and others which leaves a lump in your throat and a smile on your face.

Downie was the frontman of The Tragically Hip and a genuine Canadian icon. Mourning for his death from brain cancer at age 53 on Oct. 17, about 18 months after his illness was revealed, was led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The band's tour in the summer of last year was his public exit and "Introduce Yourself" is its intimate counterpart.

Recorded over two, four-day sessions in January 2016 and this February, many of the songs, mostly co-written with producer Kevin Drew, from Broken Social Scene, are first takes relying principally on guitar, piano and drums. On one tune, clattering hockey sticks provide the percussion.

Some of the dedications are relatively easy to decode, as with "Bedtime" (tucking in one of his children), "Love Over Money" (about his Hip bandmates), or "My First Girlfriend." For others, like album closer "The North," it's good to know about Downie's advocacy for Canada's indigenous peoples or, concerning the title track, his late struggles with memory loss. A handful, like "A Better End," "Snowflake" or "Yer Ashore," seem even more mysterious or intimate.

The emotional charge of the tunes is impossible to miss, and if you can sometimes hear the music stretching to catch up with the words, or vice versa, it's an indication of the album's urgency.

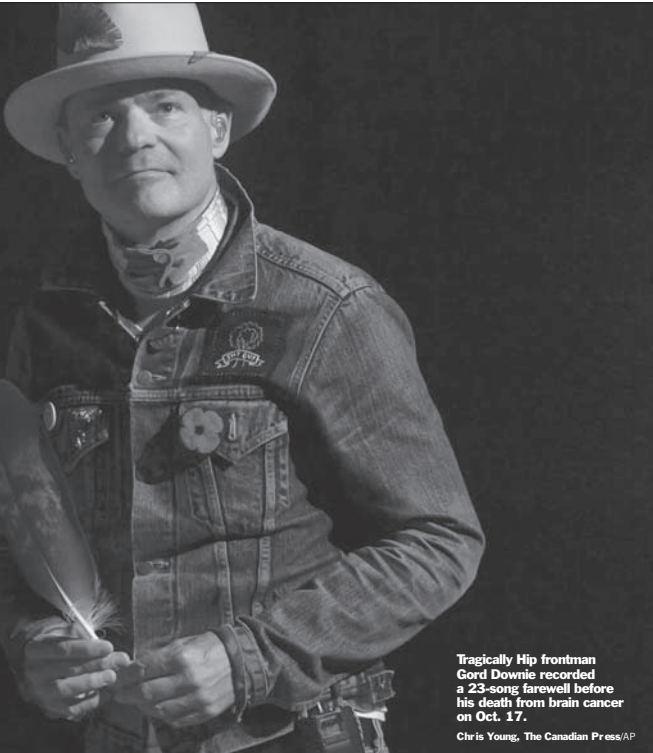
Downie said "each song is about a person," but with so much being expressed in such a poetic way, it's inevitable that many, many more will be touched.

— Pablo Gorondi
Associated Press



Gord Downie

Introduce Yourself (Arts & Crafts)



Tragically Hip frontman Gord Downie recorded a 23-song farewell before his death from brain cancer on Oct. 17.

Chris Young, The Canadian Press/AP

A star-studded lineup — including Willie Nelson, Emmylou Harris, Rodney Crowell and Lady Antebellum — performs a live tribute to one of country music's transformative singer-songwriters.

Although he's scored hits on his own, Kris Kristofferson's greatest achievements have been as a songwriter. By the early 1970s his portfolio included such standards as "Help Me Make It Through the Night" (Sammi Smith), "Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down" (Johnny Cash) and "Nobodys Wins" (Brenda Lee).

Those all are on the album, sung by others, along with selections like Reba McEntire's "Me and Bobby McGee," "Jesus Was a Capricorn (Owed to John Prine)" by Jack Ingram, whose vocals are very Prine — and Rosanne Cash's heartfelt "Loving Her Was Easier (Than Anything I'll Ever Do Again)" — where "her" becomes "him."

With backing from a band including Don Was, Buddy Miller, Matt Rollings and Greg Leisz, other performers include Alison Krauss with "Casey's Last Ride," Eric Church's personal take on "To Beat the Devil" and Hank Williams Jr.'s line-in-the-sand "If You Don't Like Hank Williams."

A sung mini-biography of the honoree, "Kristofferson," with Jessi Alexander, Jon Randall and Larry Gatlin, is the only tune not written by him, while the man himself takes the stage a few times, including closer "Why Me."

Released with a DVD of the Nashville concert, "The Life & Songs of Kris Kristofferson" is a winning approach to a career overview, relying on outstanding performers to draw from a deep catalog of excellent tunes.

— Pablo Gorondi
Associated Press



Various artists

The Life & Songs of Kris Kristofferson (Blackbird)

After a long sojourn, Lee Ann Womack got her mojo back on 2014's "The Way I'm Living." Now she's returned to her native East Texas to make "The Lonely, The Lonesome & The Gone," as good an album as she's ever done.

Produced again by her husband, Frank Liddell, the set relies more on Womack's songwriting than before. She co-wrote six of the 14 tunes, including down-on-your-luck opener "All the Trouble" and the desolate "Hollywood," portraying a relationship (barely) going through the motions.

The magnificent "He Called Me Baby" comes down somewhere between Charlie Rich's version, a country chart-topper, and Candi Staton's soulful reading, while her take on popular murder ballad "Long Black Veil" emphatically transmits its needless tragedy.

On "Mama Lost Her Smile," she searches in vain through a box of photographs only to find that "you don't take pictures / of the bad times / we only want to remember all the sunshine."

The album was recorded mostly at Houston's Sugar Hill Studios, where Womack got to sing fellow Texan George Jones' redemptive "Take the Devil Out of Me," who cut his original version nearly 60 years ago.

Once a stalwart of contemporary country, Womack's career has darted between categories. She scored a huge crossover hit with "I Hope You Dance" in 2000, and now you'll find her in the Americana section of music magazines. Whatever the label, she's achieved a natural blend of styles bonded together by her country roots and her flair for evolving outside the box.

— Pablo Gorondi
Associated Press



Lee Ann Womack

The Lonely, The Lonesome & The Gone (ATO records)

The sound of the road permeates the latest release from the Turnpike Troubadours, a hard-charging six-piece band out of Oklahoma that's been honing its earthy sound for four albums now — and would displace some of the schlock at the top of the country charts in a world with a little more justice.

On their latest release, "A Long Way from Your Heart," the band follows singer-songwriter Evan Felker into the space between country and rock with well-crafted tunes that, while they might not break into new and original regions of the stratosphere, do hurtle forward on the wings of muscular playing.

The Troubadours have honed their craft in the honky-tonks of Oklahoma and Texas for years now, and it shows. The playing is tight, the songs conversational and engaging. It feels like having a beer with a friend who can't settle down but tells stories that are warm, personal and funny.

Consider "The Housefire," a narrative about waking up in a burning house that sounds like it really happened. It's not deep, just vivid, and like much of the band's work, honest and straightforward.

The same holds true on the album's best song, "The Hard Way," which matches vaguely confessional lyrics with the band's natural forward propulsion.

"Now I'm headed out with the same unrest," Felker sings with urgency. "Tried to tear it down, but it was unimpressed."

Restless? Absolutely. But headed somewhere great? Don't bet against it.

— Scott Stroud
Associated Press



Turnpike Troubadours

A Long Way from Your Heart (Bossier City/Thirty Tigers)

WEEKEND: MUSIC

STAY WITH HIM

Sam Smith's second album gives indications he's coming into his own

By ALLISON STEWART
Special To The Washington Post

Earlier this year, there was a half-serious conspiracy theory floated by fans on Twitter that Adele and Sam Smith were the same person.

Hear them out: Both are white 20-something Brits who use the musical conventions of the American South in the '60s to craft sad, swingy ballads for people twice their age. Both have won many Grammys, and an Oscar each for singing a Bond theme. When Adele is on an album cycle, Smith, whose second album, "The Thrill of It All," was released Nov. 3, lays low, and vice versa. No one remembers seeing them in the same place at the same time.

But Adele is one of the only subjects that can be agreed upon in 2017, a Teflon-wrapped unicorn who can put across some very tepid pop songs through the sheer force of her personality, something Smith is unable to do. She can get away with anything; Smith has made a side career out of stepping in it.

Ever since his breakout feature turn on Disclosure's 2012 hit "Latch," Sam Smith and fame have uncomfortably coexisted. He sold more than 12 million copies of "In the Lonely Hour," his 2014 debut. He came out as gay around the time of its release and took extreme care to avoid alienating mainstream fans with overt references to a male love interest, even scrubbing the gender pronouns from a cover of Whitney Houston's "How Will I Know."

He has in turn suffered the affections of a fickle internet, been criticized for things other people



Sam Smith
The Thrill of It All (Capitol)

was, is a mournful retro soul album that relies on Smith's otherworldly voice to carry the load. Almost every song is sad, but that voice was built for sadness. Heartbreak is where Sam Smith lives. He's in love not with love itself, but with its endless opportunities for self-abasement and misery. He is love's most ardent seeker, its most bereft mourner. He will bludgeon you with it ("Burning," with its beautifully over the top gospel choir), suffocate you with its earnestness ("Midnight Train," with its Radiohead circa "Creep" guitars).

No house built on such a sublime foundation, buttressed by the horns and gospel choirs of a hundred classic midcentury R&B albums, should be this empty inside. But "The Thrill of It All" is so much of a piece, such a beautiful but monotonous sadness, you might not be able to resist building a better Sam Smith album in your head, to wonder

what would have happened if he had had more contemporary reference points. Smith works mostly with his longtime collaborator Jimmy Napes, and a handful of songwriting and production vets such as Stargate and Timbaland (the latter on the raise-the-rafters, gospel-inspired ballad "Pray"), and, for better or ill, seems mostly unmoved by their influence.

But what if he had made a buzzy '80s pop album, like Taylor Swift without the score settling, or returned to the languorous electro-pop of his Disclosure period? Even some of pop music's more unhappily ubiquitous characters start to seem like good ideas: Jack Antonoff probably couldn't have made the dirge-y piano ballad "Too Good at Good-byes" any worse. Is Ed Sheeran busy?

It's only on the slow-burning ballad "HIM" that the album delivers on the promise implicit in Smith's voice. Written from the point of view of a young man in Mississippi defending his love for another man to his father, and to his Father ("Don't you try and tell me that God doesn't care for us / It is him I love"), it's a moving and a novel exploration of the intersection of religion and LGBTQ issues.

It's a promising indication that Smith is coming into his own, is more than the male version of Adele, with worse producers and social skills. He's one of the only contemporary pop artists in 2017 who hasn't abdicated their responsibility to tell the truth about the state of the world. That "The Thrill of It All," with its tentative but moving use of male pronouns, its quietly defiant songs about faithless boyfriends, its judicious use of the word "he" even exists inside the pop mainstream is a small miracle, even if, for now, at least, its miracles end there.



Sam Smith's sadness on his new album, "The Thrill of It All," comes with a lot of emptiness.

SAMSMITHWORLD.COM/TNS

WEEKEND: BOOKS

Laying bare his mind

‘Fault in Our Stars’ author writes mental disorder into new book

By KRISTIN M. HALL
Associated Press

In the years since John Green's tear-jerker love story about two teen cancer patients became a best-seller in 2012, the young adult novelist and video blogger wondered if he would ever be able to write another book. After “The Fault in Our Stars” sold over 45 million copies and was adapted into a popular film, the pressure was immense.

“I definitely felt like people were looking over my shoulder while I was trying to write,” Green said during a recent book tour stop in Nashville. “I think that was the biggest reason why it took me so many years between books was because I definitely felt overwhelmed by the scale of things.”

But to the relief of his many passionate fans, Green is back with his new novel, “Turtles All the Way Down.” Green found inspiration in a mental disorder he lives with but has long struggled to describe in his writing.

His female protagonist in “Turtles” is obsessive-compulsive, like Green himself. She's thrust into the role of a teen detective trying to locate a missing billionaire while falling for his son. But unlike Sherlock Holmes, 16-year-old Aza Holmes can barely see the world outside her own head as her illness takes her on ever-deepening spirals of repeated thoughts about anxieties and identity.

“That is my experience of OCD,” Green said. “It does not come with secret detective powers despite the convention of the Sherlock Holmes stories. My experience with OCD is that it makes me incredibly unobservant.”

Aza's disorder manifests itself as a fear of bacterial infection. When she pushes back against these intrusive thoughts, the

“Turtles All the Way Down” is best-selling author John Green's first novel since 2012's runaway success, “The Fault in Our Stars.”

Courtesy of Marina Waters



anxiety increases until she feels no longer in control of her own body or actions. She constantly opens a wound on her finger to disinfect herself, which escalates even further in the climax of the novel.

Although Green has been dealing with OCD since childhood, he avoided writing it into his stories because he was afraid of how it would affect him.

“I think partly because I felt like writing about it would give it power somehow, when in fact it didn’t,” Green said.

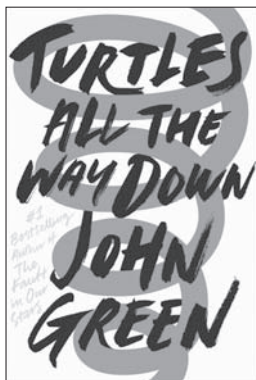
But he also struggled with how to describe the psychological torment of not

feeling in control of yourself and losing your own identity in a mental illness.

“It’s really difficult to give it form or find language for it,” Green said. “That was one of the things I wanted to write about was how much language struggles in the face of pain.”

The characters in his new book find different ways and technologies to communicate with each other — through blogs, poems, texting, or “Star Wars” fan fiction — to make up for their fears of interaction in real life.

For a decade, Green and his brother,



Hank, a musician and author, have been interacting with their fans via their YouTube collaboration called the Vlogbrothers. Along the way, they’ve built a loyal online community of fans who identify as “nerdfighters” and follow the motto of “Don’t Forget To Be Awesome.” Green joked that he could connect with fans “while never leaving my basement, which is very appealing.”

“I love being a part of that community and it’s tremendously invigorating to me to see their fan art, to read their comments and read fan fiction about my books,” Green said.

By now his audience has grown far outside young adult readers, but he said that hasn’t really changed his approach to writing about teens.

“I think the emotional experiences of being a teenager are pretty universal,” Green said. “And I think the questions that they are asking — about identity and how you acknowledge personhood in other people and whether meaning in life is constructed by us or derived by something else — those are questions that are still fairly important to me.”

Inventive novel ‘Hiddensee’ inspired by ‘Nutcracker’

By RON CHARLES
The Washington Post

If you have a child who dreams of dancing, you’ve seen “The Nutcracker” enough times to know that you can’t give until Clara finally wakes up — and you do, too.

During the years when my younger daughter studied at Boston Ballet, she was sometimes a mouse, sometimes a soldier, always adorable. But the tickets were about \$80 apiece, and there were grandparents and other relatives who wanted in on this cherished holiday performance, which meant that the Stahlbaums’ opulence depended, at least in part, on my impoverishment.

I’m not complaining. That gorgeous Russian score wound around E.T.A. Hoffman’s surreal story produced one of the world’s most idiotic tales. Every time I hear Tchaikovsky’s music — even the tortured pop versions at the mall — visions of sugar plums swirl in my head.

Which made me excited to read “Hiddensee,” Gregory Maguire’s new novel about “a

once and future Nutcracker.” Maguire would seem the perfect author for this act of creative investigation. He’s already delved into the early lives of such fantastical figures as Snow White and Cinderella. And, of course, his novel about the Wicked Witch of the West is the basis for that spellbinding Broadway hit “Wicked.”

But there’s barely a nut-shell of music or magic in “Hiddensee.” Maguire has a style glazed with a patina of Old World formality.

Don’t look for the passion and color of Tchaikovsky here; this is a novel with its own palette of darker, woodland tones.

In Bavaria around 1808, a founding boy named Dirk lives with an old woman and an old woodcutter. When a falling tree knocks Dirk out, he experiences a vision of a talking bird, a gnome and a very aggrieved spirit of

the forest. Returning to life and believing that his guardians will again try to kill him, Dirk runs away from home into the wide world he knows nothing about. “How many times,” he wonders, “will I lie down in a darkness whose character I cannot imagine, to see what breakdown reveals of my new circumstances?”

Many times. Dirk is a “bit of a dolt,” Maguire writes, but not usually the funny kind. Although he’s literal and serious, he’s no rude, nor is he a naive standard of moral innocence like Mark Twain’s Huck Finn. As Dirk wanders around Germany with a patch over one eye — the result of that accident in the forest — he views everyone from a distance. He can be an oversensitive prig. “I have no talents,” he says honestly. “I only watch and listen.” Something about his upbringing with those two loveless guardians has cauterized his affections. Even his rare flutterings of lust and romance are tightly constrained, largely unexpressed — one might say, almost wooden.

But despite some early allu-

sions, Dirk is not the Nutcracker himself, which may be what sets this novel on its pedestrian trajectory. The moment a village pastor names our hero “Drosselmeier,” the pixie dust falls from the pages, and it’s clear that this is the story of a future toymaker, not the tale of a magical soldier who will battle the Mouse King around Clara’s Christmas tree.

And yet — like Dirk — the novel feels suspended between realism and fantasy. “You’re an oddity among young men,” says one of the many people who struggle to get close to him. “Does anyone know much about you?” No, not even we do, though we follow Dirk from one village to another. That structure allows Maguire to sprinkle the plot with references to 19th-century characters, all of whom seem more vivacious than our one-eyed hero. (An extended encounter with the hypnotist Franz Mesmer provides the novel’s best set piece.)

But this remains very much a study of a man who left the act of fairy tales and more fully joined the world of getting and spending. Dirk doesn’t really

belong anywhere, a condition that eventually causes him a certain amount of tightly repressed anguish. Maguire explores this theme most sensitively over Dirk’s long friendship with a gay musician. For different reasons, neither of these young men can freely express what he’s feeling, but even the closeted gay man finds more happiness than Dirk, whose passions are channeled into carving wooden toys. We come to know the dimensions of his longing, but we never really know the content of his desire.

That mystery must be the point of this unhurried story, which eventually meshes with the details of Petipa and Ivanov’s ballet. Maguire suggests that we all pine for some vaguely recalled but tantalizing moment from childhood. “Surely you have such a walnut in your own life,” he writes, “something that holds the key to all your past ease and safety.” Dirk’s winding journey finally brings him close to that lost paradise, but not in any way you’d expect. After all, the past is a tough nut to crack.



WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

“The Glass Castle”: No standard horror film delivers as many battles with demons, showdowns with the unknown and confrontations with emotional and physical struggles as the family drama “The Glass Castle.” The film, based on Jeannette Walls’ memoir about her life growing up with an alcoholic father, Rex (Woody Harrelson), and out-of-touch mother, Rose Mary Walls (Naomi Watts), puts the four children in the Walls family in proximity to an evil that is deeply rooted in reality. That’s why the film from director/writer Destin Daniel Cretton is such a strong story of the power of the human will, the strength that comes from family and the endless protection from human evil provided by hope. It’s Brie Larson’s performance as the older Walls child that gives the film both its touches of hopefulness and brushes with total frustration that binds all of the emotional threads. The sign of a great actor is when they can fill a long scene with multiple emotions without saying a single word. That scene for Larson in “The Glass Castle” comes during a Thanksgiving meal where she sits at the end of the table surveying the room. The look in her eyes goes from resignation to exhilaration to pure joy. This is the kind of work that has cemented Larson’s place as the leading actor with the skills to be the next Meryl Streep.



theglasscastle.movie

Movie “The Glass Castle” is now available on DVD.

“Cars 3”: Brian Fee, who was a storyboard artist with the original “Cars,” makes his directing debut in style with “Cars 3” by getting the franchise back on the right track. His script with Ben Queen (“Cars 2”) returns to the formula filmmaking that made Lightning McQueen (voiced by Owen Wilson) so entertaining during the first film lap. All of the characters in “Cars 3” are vehicles but they manage to convey very human emotions when dealing with serious issues like self-doubt, following a dream, the potholes of getting older and the importance of seeing the good in oneself that others see. Bonus points go for having not only a male perspective with McQueen (voiced by Owen Wilson) but showing the same issues aren’t gender exclusive as Cruz Ramirez (Cristela Alonzo) shows she also faces the headlines of reality.

Also new on DVD:
“Westworld: The Complete First Season”: An adult amusement park begins to have problems when the attractions begin to think for themselves.

“The Settlers”: Documentary from Shimon Dotan that looks at Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

“Killing Ground”: Camping trip turns deadly when a crime is witnessed.

“Crown: Season One”: Cable series starring Claire Foy that depicts the early years of Queen Elizabeth II’s rule.

— Rick Bentley
Tribune News Service

“SEAL Team” CBS

The camo state

‘SEAL Team’ among military dramas giving California an economic lift

By DAVID NG
Los Angeles Times

In a desolate region of northern Los Angeles County where the freeways have given way to brush-covered mountains, a television crew for CBS’ new drama series “SEAL Team” was busy putting the final touches on its effort to transform a dusty stretch of land into present-day Afghanistan.

On the edge of a barren outcrop, the crew arranged props on an Army command outpost cluttered with artillery, ammunition and even free weights for a makeshift gym. Crew members applied a brownish liquid solution to wood frames to make the structures appear convincingly weathered.

Farther up a winding dirt road, actor David Boreanaz was shooting a separate scene where his elite group of SEALs confronts members of the Pakistani military while driving to a prisoner exchange. After blocking the scene, the cast and crew shot several takes of the tense standoff for an upcoming episode.

The dry, rocky terrain of rural L.A. County has historically served as a backdrop for Hollywood Westerns, but it has now established a second showbiz life as a theater for the war against terror. The current bumper crop of patriotic, red-blooded TV series like “SEAL Team” is giving blue California an economic lift as studios produce many of these armed forces shows in the L.A. County region, employing hundreds of local technicians and actors.

Other military-themed series that film entirely or partially in the Los Angeles area include the History channel’s “Six,” USA’s “Shooter,” TNT’s “The Last Ship” and the long-running “NCIS” and “NCIS: Los Angeles” on CBS.

The county’s varied topography is a boon to dramas that call for sequences set in far-flung parts of the world as well as domestic scenes set in the U.S. Because TV series often film in highly compressed

schedules — “SEAL Team” shoots each episode in eight days, with a week of preparation — the close proximity of so many diverse locations becomes a logistical advantage.

“SEAL Team” has used the Pomona area to stand in for South Sudan, for an episode in which SEALs are sent to rescue civilians in a city under siege. It has also used San Pedro to stand in for the Philippines and Soledad Canyon near Acton as Paraguay. “We want to shoot it as realistically as we can and you can’t fake that many landscapes,” said Christopher Chulack, an executive producer on “SEAL Team.” “Here in California, you have oceans and the desert, and it’s the variances of the landscape that is conducive to transporting the audience to foreign lands.”

The pilot episode of “SEAL Team” was shot in New Orleans, but producers relocated the series to L.A. County for the rest of the season. The series applied for California’s tax incentives for film and TV projects but was not chosen in the most recent application round, Chulack said. He said the show directly employs about 200 people, not including vendors and other contractors. Each episode costs about \$4 million to produce, which is average for an hourlong network drama series.

The series schedules multiple scenes at each location to minimize transportation costs. “We’re always trying to find locations where we can shoot as much as possible,” said Stuart Blatt, the series’ production designer.

Among the major economic beneficiaries of the surge in military dramas are southern California’s movie ranches, which rent out their acres of space to movies, TV and commercial shoots.

Blue Cloud, which features 250 acres of parched landscape in Santa Clarita, offers standing Middle Eastern sets and war props, including a fleet of military vehicles.

“SEAL Team” used Blue Cloud to represent Syria in the series’ second episode when the team investigates the use of biological weapons. “American Sniper,” the Clint Eastwood film about the late Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, filmed combat scenes at the ranch in 2014. The ranch recently constructed a forward operating

base set that can be used for war scenes. “There’s isn’t a veteran of Iraq or Afghanistan that comes to the ranch that doesn’t mention, often with a bit of a shudder, how both our FOB and our town bring them back,” said Dylan Lewis, the owner of Blue Cloud.

Other economic beneficiaries are pyrotechnic specialists. “SEAL Team” and other shows frequently require pyrotechnic expertise to safely simulate the violence of battle in exterior scenes.

The companies that manufacture explosives for film and TV productions are all located in California. Series that shoot in the L.A. County area can usually procure explosives on short notice, which is an advantage in the fast-moving world of TV production.

Despite its geographic and logistical advantages, California has lost some high-profile military dramas to other states.

NBC’s “The Brave,” which is also in its first season, shoots in New Mexico. The drama series follows a special forces team that travels the globe to eliminate threats to American interests. The CW’s freshman series “Valor” shoots in Georgia.

Both Georgia and New Mexico offer tax incentives to Hollywood productions. But California still offers a distinct advantage with its large number of military bases and facilities, many of which accommodate film and TV shoots, said Amy Lemisch, executive director of the California Film Commission.

Edwards Air Force Base has served as a backdrop for military scenes in the “Transformers” and “Iron Man” movies. The state also has decommissioned Navy ships that allow filming, like the battleship Iowa in San Pedro, which has hosted “The Last Ship” and “NCIS: L.A.”

“Here in California, you have oceans and the desert, and it’s the variances of the landscape that is conducive to transporting the audience to foreign lands.”

— Christopher Chulack, an executive producer on “SEAL Team”

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

By LORI RILEY

Hartford (Conn.) Courant

When Janice Pauly called Patrick Fischer about adding pickleball to the state Masters Games seven years ago, Fischer almost hung up on her.

Fischer, the executive director of the Connecticut Sports Management Group, had never heard of the sport and thought his friends were playing a joke on him.

"His friends used to call him and suggest all these outrageous sports that didn't exist to include in the schedule," Pauly said, laughing. "And he thought I was one of them."

Pickleball has nothing to do with pickles, although the name may have been inspired by a dog named Pickles. Looking for something to do with their kids one day in the summer of 1965, three men on Bainbridge Island, Wash., created a game that combined elements of badminton, tennis and table tennis. One of the founders, Joel Pritchard, had a cocker spaniel named Pickles, who, as the sport's lore has it, would steal stray balls. In 1976, the first tournament was held. The first national tournament was held in 2009 in Arizona and attracted 400 competitors. According to the USA Pickleball Association website, there are currently 4,000 places to play the sport.

At the Governor William A. O'Neill State Armory in Hartford, Conn., the thwack of pickleball paddles hitting yellow plastic balls reverberated through the old gym as women and men, sorted by age groups and skill level, faced off in the USA Pickleball Atlantic Regional Tournament last month.

Pauly is the tournament director. She started playing seven years ago, after she retired from teaching physical education. "Pickleball was part of our curriculum because it's a really good game for kids," Pauly said. "It's so easy to just play it. You can play at a low level or a high level like some of these players. But kids can play it right off the bat. I learned the game there."

"When I retired, I found out a friend of mine played competitive pickleball. I watched her play in a match, and it looked like fun, so we got together and became partners for doubles for a long time."

Pauly has about 400 people who play the sport in Ridgefield, where she lives.

"The biggest thing people find enjoyable is the social part of it," she said. "It's an extremely social game. It's a community of people."

Pickleball is similar to tennis, but it's played on a much smaller court, so it's appealing to older tennis players or others with achy joints.

Ken Henderson, a former tennis pro from Danbury, is a pickleball enthusiast and instructor. He has won championships in both singles and doubles in New York, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

"A 70-year-old can beat a 30-year-old in this game; they can't do that in tennis, because there's a soft game and a hard game, and also there's an underhand serve," Henderson, 51, said. "I was just playing against an 18-year-old, and somehow I tied him. He's an excellent player. I used some of my smarts, shots I had in tennis which transitioned into pickleball. And the court is smaller — it's 40 percent of a tennis court, so you don't have to move as much. You can't put the ball away as quick. In pickleball, it takes a little longer to put the ball away."

Henderson had a rotator cuff injury that prevented him from serving in tennis. When he switched to pickleball with its underhand serve, it didn't bother him. And his tennis background helped.

"There are a lot of tennis specific strokes that transition into pickleball very well," he said. "Your ground

Above: Ken Henderson, 51, of Danbury, Conn., right, competes against Ernesto Fajardo, 18, of Canada, at the USA Pickleball Atlantic Regional Tournament in Hartford, Conn., last month.

Mark Minko/Hartford (Conn.) Courant



It's time for PICKLEBALL

Racket sport with a funny name is growing in popularity



strokes, forehand and backhand — in pickleball, it's the same strokes as tennis. Your volley at the net is a lot the same."

And when he tried the sport for the first time, he said, "I absolutely never felt so exhilarated in any sport that I played before like pickleball."

On a recent Friday, the mostly older crowd milled around the courts, watching matches and wearing "Pickleball Rocks" shirts. But the sport is starting to attract a younger element as well. Ernesto Fajardo, a top 18-year-old player from Canada, was one of the competitors.

"It's growing so fast now," Henderson said. "There were no kids a couple years ago. The kids are starting to come into it."

In tennis, singles is traditionally more popular than doubles, but in pickleball, Henderson said, 90 percent of the competitors play doubles and not singles.

"It's easier on your body [than tennis]," he said. "It's more fun. It's more intimate and social because you're on a smaller court. You can play doubles; you don't have to run that much. But I get the same workout or better than I do in tennis."

Susan Roberts came to watch with some friends, who are trying to get pickleball courts set up in West Hartford, where they live.

"We're trying to encourage them to take two of the tennis courts that are at Wolcott [Park] and scheduled to be refurbished next year and turn them into pickleball courts," Roberts said. "You can get up to eight pickleball courts on two tennis courts. That way we have somewhere dedicated where people of all age groups can play."

WEEKEND: FAMILY



Teachable moments

Parents use Hollywood allegations as reason to talk with kids about assault

By LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press

Kenna Cook is a sex educator by profession, so it's natural that at home she teaches her two boys, ages 4 and 7, about the nuances of consent and the importance of being the bosses of their own bodies.

When sexual harassment allegations against film producer Harvey Weinstein hit, she sat them down once again.

"I told them that there have been people in my life, men and women, who have not listened when I have said that I am the boss of my body," said Cook, who lives in Sacramento, Calif. "They were unkund to me and did not respect my words. We talked about how many other women and girls have been hurt by men and boys."

With an avalanche of sexual harassment accusations in Hollywood, media and politics in recent days, parents like Cook are reaching for teachable moments.

"We teach them to always ask before touching anyone, no matter who the person is or how they responded yesterday, and to wait for a loud and clear yes before giving a hug or engaging in any other physical contact," Cook said. "We emphasize that yes is both a word and an action."

Martha Mendez-Baldwin, who focuses on parenting as an assistant professor of psychology at Manhattan College in New York, said parents should seize the moment to open lines of communication with their kids.

"Parents should speak to their younger children about the difference between a good touch and a bad touch. They should remind their children about boundaries and privacy related to their bodies and encourage children to say no or stop if anyone, including a trusted adult, crosses those boundaries," Mendez-Baldwin said.

Parents should also reinforce the message that if this happens, "it is not their fault and they are doing the right thing by reporting it, that this is not tattletaling," she added.

Kevin Wattles, of Simi Valley, Calif., is a father, attorney and vice president of the nonprofit organization Because I Love You, which has been running parent and youth support groups around the United States and Canada for 35 years.

"It is imperative that our kids know that we listen to them and are interested in what is going on in their lives, not only with matters like how school was that day, but things they are interested in, whether we are or not," he said. "What things have happened recently that make them happy and what things have happened that they find confusing or that make them unhappy?"

Dr. Karen Soren, a professor of pediatrics at Columbia University Medical Center in New York, urged parents not to shy away from the allegations against Weinstein, who has been accused by more than 50 women of sexual harassment or assault, and a string of allegations by both men and women against other powerful men in Hollywood.

"These are serious issues and

parents may often feel that they're 'adult topics,'" said Soren. "However, kids of all ages and genders pick up on these conversations at school, on playgrounds and on social media, so it's important to address them openly at home as well."

John Crossman, a commercial real estate developer in Orlando, Fla., has two daughters, ages 12 and 14. When both reached puberty, he let them know he would no longer offer hugs without their permission. He said their first question was: "Does that go for Mom, too?"

He assured them it did not. Ever since, the girls have been happily and freely affectionate with dad.

"I just really wanted to reinforce that message of having control of your body," Crossman said. "What I told them was no man has a right to put his hands on your body, including me. I want you to know, I'm your dad. I want to hug you all the time, but I'm never going to hug you unless you want a hug from me."

Have they come to him with additional questions in the wake of Weinstein?

"We've tried to discuss it in an open way," said Crossman, the son of a pastor and civil rights leader.

"It's been a reinforcing, but we go beyond. They're very much aware that their grandfather did things in his career that he could have died for, so there are things worth dying for and worth getting fired for. ... Get fired, but don't stay silent because there may be 15 other girls or women going through the exact same thing. Be the one who stands up."

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Program for vets also helps families

In my 24 years as a Navy wife, I never lost sleep worrying that my husband had been injured in combat. Due to the nature of his job, he was mostly shielded from danger, and thus, his service to his country did not come with a huge price tag.

We were lucky.

Many of the 2.7 million post-9/11 veterans are not so fortunate. More than 540,000 have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and another 260,000 have traumatic brain injuries (TBI). However, these "invisible wounds of war" are often hidden from the veterans themselves, so it is believed that the figures on PTSD are actually much higher.

The afflicted cannot cope with the resulting emotions, anxiety and depression. Relationships are ruined. Substances are abused. Warriors self-destruct. With a veteran suicide rate of 20 per day, the stark reality of the sacrifices paid by our servicemembers is truly alarming.

I am embarrassed by our military family's oblivion when many are struggling. So, when my neighbor — who works for a Boston-based clinical treatment facility for veterans with PTSD and TBI — offered to show me his workplace, I jumped at the chance.

Home Base is a veteran and family care program founded in 2009 by the Boston Red Sox and Massachusetts General Hospital. It is one of four such facilities at academic medical centers — the others are Rush in Chicago, Emory in Atlanta and UCLA in Los Angeles.

They offer both outpatient treatment as well as inpatient Intensive Clinical Programs (ICPs) funded by Wounded Warrior Project. Home Base's ICP involves two weeks of residential treatment at no cost to veterans. Ten injured warriors at a time enter ICP as a "cohort." Since the pilot program in 2015, 27 cohorts have gone through ICP with promising results.

The cohorts attend individual and group therapies, exposure or cognitive processing therapies, wellness activities and coping skills training. They get one year's worth of therapy in 14 days.

I visited on day 15 — graduation day.

I was taken to a small, quiet space that had been neatly lined with folding chairs. A table held yellow flowers, challenge coins and graduation certificates.

From the back, I watched the cohort file into the front row. Clinicians, staff and a few of the veterans' family members took the seats behind.

In ICP, veterans can invite one family member to attend the program for two days during the second week to receive coping skills training and attend group therapy. It's an integral part of recovery, according to Home Base's CEO, retired Brig. Gen. Jack Hammond. "The family members have been injured by virtue of their own service of having a loved one so far away, or by the servicemember coming home and disrupting the family ecosystem. In either case, you can't just treat the veteran; you have to heal the entire ecosystem," he said.

After heartfelt speeches from clinicians and staff, members of the cohort stood to speak to the group.

A gruff warrior with a salt-and-pepper beard could only squeak out "Thank you" before being seized by emotion.

A female veteran whom they referred to as their "den mother," showed her appreciation for the simplicity of the process. "Here, you wake up, you set your soul free, then you go to sleep. You get up the next day, and do it all over again."

A quiet veteran stood with his PTSD assistance dog and admitted that his treatment might be too late to save his marriage. "But that's okay. It's reality, and now I have other people I can reach out to. I have friends. I'll be OK." Gen. Hammond encouraged other warriors to consider treatment. "I like to tell veterans, you are not alone; every one of us has gone through these challenges, me included. The key is to get care, start the process. We can give you hope for a better life."

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

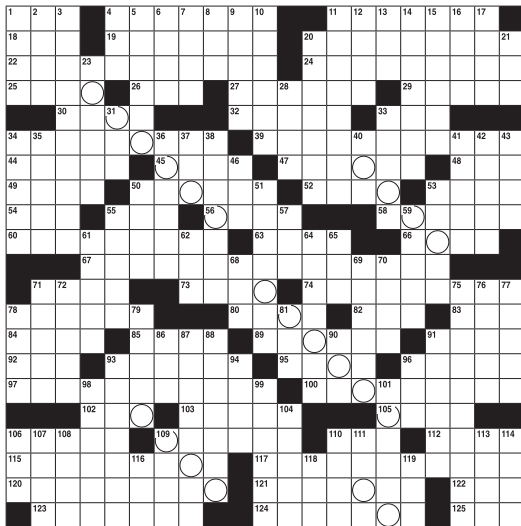
WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

LANE CHANGES

BY NATAN LAST / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| ACROSS | 55 Scarcely | 109 Showy debut | 15 Overflow (with) |
| 1 Popular web portal | 56 Freudian "will to live" | 110 A germophobe might have it, for short | 16 Fabulist |
| 4 Sweet stuff | 58 Better, to an impatient boss | 112 Acronym for the four major entertainment awards | 17 Russia's ____ Sea (arm of the Arctic Ocean) |
| 11 Braggadocio | 60 Spots likely to smear | 20 Hungarians | 21 Activist youth org. |
| 18 "Well, well, well!" | 63 Italian novelist Morante | 23 Snacks | 28 Ball brand |
| 19 Coming | 66 Destroys, in gamer-speak | 31 La Dame de ____ (Eiffel Tower nickname) | 33 Sacred crosses |
| 20 Slant in columns | 67 1916 Frost verse ... or diverged: Start of a saying about meaning well | 120 Hit 2007 Will Smith film | 34 1946 femme-fatale film |
| 22 1992 movie based on an "S.N.L." sketch ... or diverged: Modus vivendi | 71 "Star Wars" nomad | 121 Some potatoes | 35 Santa's reindeer, e.g. |
| 24 Railroad line? | 73 Opposite of "da" | 122 Comic-strip cry | 36 Monumental support |
| 25 "Out!" | 74 Put a cover on | 123 Establish, as rules | 37 TV band |
| 26 Suffix with host | 78 Molson rival | 124 Gratiatio's love in "The Merchant of Venice" | 38 "Word on the street is ..." |
| 27 Like pins-and-needles feelings | 80 "No, ___!" | 125 Line in the sand? | 40 Deadly cobra |
| 29 Mystiques | 82 Heads overseas? | | 41 Wilson of "The Office" |
| 30 Defunct org. in which Donald Trump owned the New Jersey Generals | 83 Conal, e.g. | | 42 They might be giants |
| 32 "Adios!" | 84 A long way off | | 43 Kind of review |
| 33 "Prince Valiant" son | 85 Part of a treasure chest | | 46 The usual |
| 34 "We're doomed!" | 89 Another form of "Jehovah" | | 50 Actress Sommer |
| 35 Computer mouse action ... or, diverged: Event for RuPaul | 91 Big swig | | 51 "Keep out" sign |
| 44 Less friendly | 92 W.W. II org. whose insignia featured Athena | | 53 Burgs |
| 45 Blue-roofed eatery | 93 Prepare, as leftovers | | 55 Bygone Apple app |
| 47 Gambols | 95 Fill-up filler | | 57 ____-pitch |
| 48 Time to remember | 96 Cassava, for one | | 59 Autobahn autos |
| 49 Erstwhile Fords | 97 Bring someone home ... or, diverged: Common high school offering | | 61 Feuding |
| 50 "The Simpsons Theme" composer Danny | 100 Frigid | | 62 Syndicate head in "Ocean's Eleven" |
| 52 Many a frat pledge | 102 From L to r | | 65 Chem. neurotransmitter |
| 53 Become bored (of) | 103 Proscriptions | | 68 Sheriff's asst. |
| 54 ____ mother | 105 Chill out | | 69 "Them's the breaks, I guess" |
| | 106 "Burton" that's plainly visible | | |



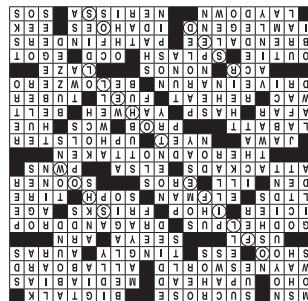
- | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 70 ____ Industries (oil and gas giant) | 79 Gender-neutral possessive | 91 Tippy | 108 Motif for Verdi or Monteverdi |
| 71 "Aladdin" villain | 81 Lumuxox | 93 Shrank | 109 Whole heap |
| 72 Summers back in the day? | 86 Philip ____, first Asian-American film actor to get a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame | 94 Skipjack, e.g. | 110 "Fancy seeing you here!" |
| 75 "How Deep Is Your Love" group | 87 "Milk" star, 2008 | 96 Early flight inits. | 111SSS bigwigs |
| 76 "Introduction to the Analysis of the Infinite" writer | 88 Interrupted midsentence? | 98 For naught | 113 Certain fro-yo add-in |
| 77 Cool again | 90 Like leprechauns | 99 Straight-talking | 114 Sounds of reproof |
| 78 God, informally | | 101 Certain radio format | 115 Bismirch |
| | | 104 What you might sit in by the pool | 116 Baskin |
| | | 106 Kabuki sash | 118 Eavesdropping org. |
| | | 107 Territory in Risk | |

GUNSTON STREET



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In the War of 1812, the British control the most powerful navy on earth, and Americans are again victims of piracy. Bliven Putnam is dispatched to Charleston to take command of the USS Tempest. Bliven disrupts British merchant shipping, until he is defeated by the frigate HMS Java. With guns-blazing action, *A Darker Sea* illuminates an unforgettable period in American history.



FACES

Country STRONG

Annual music awards highlighted by political, emotional moments



PHOTOS BY CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

Garth Brooks — who said he lip-synced his performance because he didn't want to lose his voice — won entertainer of the year at the CMA Awards at the Bridgestone Arena in Nashville on Wednesday.

BY MESFIN FEKAADU

Associated Press

The 2017 Country Music Association Awards marked one of its most political and emotional shows in years, as the night offered powerful moments focused on unifying as a country during a year dominated by gun violence, divisive politics and natural disasters.

Carrie Underwood broke down while singing during Wednesday night's 58th Annual CMA Awards. She sang to the 58 people who died at a country music festival last month in Las Vegas. Little Big Town's Kimberly Schlapman quoted Maya Angelou when the foursome won vocal group of the year at the Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, while bandmate Karen Fairchild told the audience, "Kindness is an attractive quality."

"Tonight should be about harmony, about what we can do together to change things," Fairchild said.

That sentiment was present throughout the three-hour show, which aired on ABC.

While paying tribute to Charley Pride, filmmaker Terry Perry said now is the time we have to all "find some common ground." And the show opened with a performance by Keith Urban, Eric Church, Darius Rucker and Lady Antebellum honoring the victims of the recent mass shootings, as well as the tens of thousands of people affected by hurricanes in recent months.

Urban took things a step further when he debuted a song called "Female," which he said was inspired by the dozens of allegations of sexual assault and harassment against Harvey Weinstein. He earned a rousing applause after the performance.

The CMA Awards also paid tribute to some of the genre's brightest stars who have passed away. Glen Campbell, who died in August, was honored during a touching performance of "Wichita Lineman" by Little Big Town and Jimmy Webb, who wrote the song.

Rascal Flatts and Dierks Bentley also paid homage to Troy Gentry, one-half of the popular country duo Montgomery Gentry, who died in a helicopter crash in September. Eddie Montgomery



"Tonight should be about harmony, about what we can do together to change things."

— Karen Fairchild of Little Big Town, vocal group of the year winners



Carrie Underwood performs "Softly and Tenderly" during an In Memoriam tribute at the 51st Annual CMA Awards.

later joined in for the performance of "My Town," as some audience members sang along with tears in their eyes.

"This has been a year marked by tragedy ... Tonight we're going to do what families do, come together, pray together, cry together and sing together, too," said Underwood, who co-hosted the show. "This show is dedicated to all those we lost," fellow host Brad Paisley said.

Paisley and Underwood celebrated their 10-year anniversary — as hosts of the CMAs. They joked at the top of the show about CMA sending restrictions to press, barring them from asking singers on the red carpet about politics or guns. The restriction was rescinded following backlash. They also riffed on politics, taking shots at both President Don-

ald Trump and Hillary Clinton. "Maybe next time he'll think before he tweets," they sang to the beat of Underwood's massive hit, "Before He Cheats."

One person they didn't joke about was Taylor Swift. And though Swift is releasing her second pop album this week, she's still being awarded for her contributions to country music.

Swift won song of the year — awarded to songwriters — for penning Little Big Town's No. 1 hit, "Better Man." Swift will release her sixth album, "reputation," on Friday.

"She couldn't be here tonight but Taylor, wherever you are, thank you for this beautiful song," Fairchild said onstage.

Swift wasn't the only pop star who had a presence at the CMAs. Pink sang her slow tune "Barbie," backed by several musicians and singers, while One Direction's Niall Horan performed a duet with singer Maren Morris.

Garth Brooks, who lip synced during his performance because he said he didn't want to lose his voice, won entertainer of the year for a sixth time, beating out Luke Bryan, Chris Stapleton, Church and Urban.

Other winners at the show included Miranda Lambert (female vocalist of the year), Brothers Osborne (vocal duo of the year) and Jon Pardi (new artist of the year). Campbell and Willie Nelson won musical event of the year for "Funny How Time Slips Away."

Stapleton won male vocalist of the year and album of the year for his sophomore effort, "From a Room: Volume 1."

'Friends' star makes TV return with actress Reese Witherspoon

From wire services

"Friends" star Jennifer Aniston is coming back to television and she's partnering with Reese Witherspoon.

The Apple streaming service said Wednesday the actresses will star in and produce a behind-the-scenes drama series about a TV morning show.

Aniston came to fame as Rachel on the hit NBC comedy "Friends," which aired from 1994 to 2004. She then focused on films, including "Office Space" and "Marley & Me." The Oscar-winning Witherspoon ("Walk the Line") made a TV splash last season with HBO's Emmy-winning series "Big Little Lies," which she starred in and produced with Nicole Kidman.

The new series marks a TV reunion for its stars: Witherspoon and Aniston played sisters on an episode of "Friends."

Landing the buzzed-about project represents a coup for Apple, which said it's ordered two seasons but didn't announce the show's title, release date or whether

the shows will be distributed on iTunes or a different platform. The series was described by Apple as "an inside look at the lives of the people who help America wake up in the morning, exploring the unique challenges faced by the women (and men) who carry out this daily television ritual."

Spacey to be replaced in 'All the Money in the World'

Even for those who think they have seen it all in Hollywood, 2017 continues to be a year of surprises. In the latest twist to the unfolding downfall of actor Kevin Spacey, his role as tycoon J. Paul Getty in "All the Money in the World" is being recast with Christopher Plummer.

Director Ridley Scott is said to be aiming to shoot and edit the scenes with Plummer in time to still make the film's Dec. 22 release date. The film was initially planned to have its world premiere next week as the closing night of AFI Fest. The movie was

pulled from that slot earlier this week.

"All the Money in the World" tells the saga of the 1973 kidnapping of Getty's grandson John Paul Getty III and the behind-the-scenes efforts for his return.

A representative of Sony confirmed the reshoot news to the Los Angeles Times. The decision was said to be made by Scott, his Scott Free Productions and Imperative Entertainment, the film's producers.

Study: More LGBTQ characters on TV series

A new study says TV series are including more LGBTQ characters and adding gender-nonconforming ones.

The study out Thursday from the media advocacy group GLAAD says that LGBTQ depictions increased in the current season across all TV platforms. But GLAAD said there remains a need for greater ethnic diversity and richer, more complex stories about the characters and their lives.

The study also looked at how women fare on TV and found it wanting. While women make up an estimated 51 percent of the U.S. population, they're 43 percent of the regularly appearing characters on broadcast TV — a 1 percent drop from last season, GLAAD said.

Other news

■ **Lin-Manuel Miranda** is bringing "Hamilton" to Puerto Rico in early 2019 — during which he'll reprise his leading role of founding father Alexander Hamilton. The performances will take place Jan. 8-27, 2019, at Teatro UPR.

■ **Netflix** said Wednesday that **Josh Groban** will play a straight-laced New York City detective on "The Good Cop." The actor-singer will star opposite Tony Danza, who plays his father. Danza's character, a disgraced NYPD officer, is the street-wise adviser to his cautious son.

Russia's role in securing Asia's prosperity

Vladimir Putin is president of Russia.

The distinction between “rigging” a weak and marginal party bureaucracy and rigging the nomination contests was meaningless to Trump, who tweeted that Warren — aka “Pocahontas” — had confirmed that the Democratic primaries were a scam. Trump called out his own Justice Department to investigate his giddy charge.

Francis Wilkinson writes editorials on politics and U.S. domestic policy for Bloomberg View.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Military is tarnished 2 times The Wall Street Journal

The military is one of the few institutions that Americans still hold in high esteem, but that should never be taken for granted. Two events late last week suggest that even the military's culture of high performance can be eroded without constant attention.

The first was a military judge's decision to let off Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl with a slap on the wrist for desertion in Afghanistan in 2009. After a court-martial, Army Col. Jeffery Janney recommended that Bergdahl be dishonorably discharged, demoted to private and forfeit \$10,000 in pay. Prosecutors had sought 14 years in prison.

Bergdahl was captured by the Taliban and held prisoner for nearly five years, a terrible ordeal to be sure. But those most outraged by the wrist slap are other members of the armed services who fear the damage to military honor. Bergdahl deserted on the battlefield in a forward post — the worst betrayal you can make against your fellow soldiers — and even dispatched personal effects to the U.S. before he walked off the forward base. The court-martial sentence must be demoralizing to those who do their duty and risk their lives without fanfare.

Members of Bergdahl's unit were killed or maimed when they were sent to search for him, not knowing that he had been preparing to walk away for weeks and had even dispatched personal effects to the U.S. before he walked off the forward base. The court-martial sentence must be demoralizing to those who do their duty and risk their lives without fanfare.

Even more distressing is the damage to the military's reputation by the collisions with civilian vessels this year in the Pacific theater by the USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain. The collisions — off the coast of Japan, and in the Singapore Strait, respectively — resulted in the deaths of 17 sailors. The 71-page report, which says both collisions were "avoidable," is damning about the Navy's training practices and makes for dispiriting reading if you are a civilian who thinks the U.S. Navy is the best in the world. The report says watch team members on the Fitzgerald "were not familiar with basic radar fundamentals." And it cites a "failure to plot or safely maneuver to sound navigation practices, properly use available navigation tools, and respond effectively in a crisis."

As for the McCain, the Navy cited a loss of situational awareness in response to mistakes in operating the ship's steering and combat systems. It also cited a "failure to follow the International Nautical Rules of the Road that govern maneuvering vessels amid high-density maritime traffic. These are mistakes of basic seamanship that suggest inadequate training, or shifts that are too long and cause a loss of concentration and alertness."

The Navy had already relieved the ship captains and even the commander of the Pacific Fleet. This accountability is a credit to the Navy and will be a lesson to other commanders. But it should also be a warning that Congress needs to allocate enough money to properly train sailors so they can fulfill their missions. Collisions with civilian ships in peacetime are awful, but seamanship failures during wartime would be disastrous.

Tax plan kills worthy programs The New York Times

To pass their immense tax giveaway to the rich, Republicans need to ensure their plan would add no more than \$1.5 trillion to the deficit over the next decade. To do so, they're cutting billions of dollars in tax



benefits to people trying to raise children, pay for college, buy a home or invest in renewable energy.

That is why taxes would go up for about 45 percent of middle-class taxpayers by 2026 under the House bill, according to an analysis by The Times. By contrast, the people in the top 1 percent of income will get an average tax cut of \$64,720 a year by 2027, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. Even the congressional Joint Committee on Taxation concludes that the tax cuts are heavily tilted toward the rich. Yet, the Republicans may take the knife to even more middle-class benefits, because the Congressional Budget Office said on Wednesday that the bill would overshoot the \$1.5 trillion target by nearly \$200 billion.

If the bill exceeds the \$1.5 trillion deficit threshold, it would have to be considered under rules requiring 60 votes in the Senate for passage, rather than a simple 51-vote majority. But whether the provisions in the bill are procedural necessities or just incredibly mean-spirited, these are some ways this could hurt your family.

■ The bill eliminates the adoption tax credit, which is worth \$13,750 per child to parents dealing with adoption procedures that can cost tens of thousands of dollars.

■ Republicans want to get rid of the medical expenses deduction, which is primarily used by families grappling with serious health problems.

■ Under the proposal, dependent-care benefits that families receive from employers for things like day care or elder care, including flexible spending accounts, will become taxable.

■ The bill would repeal the deduction for moving expenses when families take a new job that is at least 50 miles away.

■ One of the biggest changes in this bill is a technical one involving how income thresholds, credits and other parts of the tax code are adjusted for inflation. This will end up pushing middle-class taxpayers into higher brackets and making credits and deductions less valuable over time.

■ The Republicans want to end a program that lets state and local governments issue private-activity bonds to finance housing and let homeowners claim a tax credit on certain mortgages.

■ The bill repeals numerous education deductions and credits. It also makes taxable the value of the tuition and other benefits universities give to their graduate teaching and research assistants.

■ The House bill would require at least one parent to have a Social Security number to claim the refundable portion of child tax credit.

■ House Republicans want to require students to provide a Social Security number to claim access to the American Opportunity Tax Credit for tuition and related expenses.

■ The House bill would get rid of a \$7,500 tax credit for electric car purchases

starting with vehicles that hit the road next year.

■ The production tax credit for renewable energy will become less valuable under the Republican proposal.

Questions after each shooting Corpus Christi (Texas) Caller-Times

At least it wasn't terrorism, we tell ourselves. At least it wasn't racially or religiously motivated. This is what passes for comfort and reassurance in today's America.

The worst mass killing in Texas history is believed to have been rooted in domestic violence. It doesn't mitigate the damage but at least it's something we all can wrap our distraught, overwrought imaginations around.

Or can we, really? Think about it: What ended with 26 people dead and 20 wounded at a rural church near San Antonio may have begun, once upon a time, theoretically, with a young couple in love. Why is that not more monstrous than an Islamic State-inspired truck driver? Why is it not more objectionable, reprehensible, frightening and unfathomable than any racist or religious motive?

The answer will not wake the dead or heal the wounded any sooner. But it's worth pondering, at great length. The more we learn about domestic violence, the more we can do to prevent it.

Therefore, we should be asking, and answering: What could have been done in the way of intervention and prevention five years ago, before a marital relationship reached the stage at which Devin Kelley, Sunday's killer, was convicted for attacking his wife and her child, imprisoned for a year and discharged dishonorably by the Air Force? Might we not now be mourning 26 dead? Might his wife and her family have had less to fear in the meantime?

Still, curiously, perhaps morbidly, it's reassuring to know it likely won't. It lowers the anxiety level to have answers, no matter what they are. We know, now, that members of his wife's family attended the church, but weren't there Sunday, and that Kelley had sent threatening messages to his mother-in-law. Imagine never knowing any connection between Kelley and the church. Randomness would have been impossible to accept.

As a nation, we will be anxious enough, as it is, facing another incident of mass murder so soon, asking ourselves and each other, or dodging, the same questions as before, depending on each individual's biases and gun rights. Like the Las Vegas shooting a month ago and like the Orlando, Fla., shooting almost a year and a half before that, this one was carried out with a large-magazine-capacity semi-automatic rifle. Like those other two shootings, this one had a large death toll commensurate with the weapon's capacity and rapid-fire capability of the firearm.

We can argue endlessly about whether guns kill people, or whether people do — or whether people who use guns to kill people kill more of them when they use an AR-15 like the one Kelley used. But the one thing for certain is that it's not too early for the conversation to be had. ...

We join the rest of the nation in gratitude toward the heroes tonight who heard the shooting, retrieved his own rifle and exchanged gunfire with Kelley, ending Kelley's killing spree and chasing him away to his doom. We are glad that the neighbor had access to a rifle, knew how to use it and was willing.

We hope gun advocates embrace the neighbor's heroism for the right reasons and not for the wrong one. A gun didn't put a stop to Kelley. Bravery did. The neighbor's gun can't be recognized as the solution without also acknowledging Kelley's to have been the problem.

Army Corps does build houses The Oregonian

The American government owes the Columbia River tribes at least 85 homes to replace those lost when three dams were built decades ago and flooded out their fishing villages.

As recently as 2016, the federal government finally acknowledged that responsibility to the Warm Springs, Yakama, Umatilla and Nez Perce tribes.

And yet despite our shameful history of making and breaking promises to Native Americans, the Trump administration recently decided against providing the Army Corps of Engineers with the \$1.6 million requested to finish planning for the much-needed homes near The Dalles, as reported by The Oregonian/OregonLive's Molly Harbarger. It was a disgraceful decision that amounts to a double double-cross.

The move by Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney came as a surprise to congressional leaders from Oregon and Washington. The move and the Army Corps to replace the lost tribal housing since Harbarger's 2016 investigation into the deplorable and dangerous conditions at tribal camps along the river.

Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley and Rep. Earl Blumenauer, both Democrats, toured a row of the 31 camps, where hundreds of tribal members live without safe shelter, utilities or restrooms. Merkley, Blumenauer and Washington Sen. Patty Murray pushed successful bills last year to provide \$3 million to create plans for housing near The Dalles Dam.

Half was spent, but the remainder is needed to complete the work that the Corps has indefinitely put on hold since the budget office decision. The move frustrated tribal leaders and members who've waited so long and had hardly finished the continued progress of this plan. ...

After the post-Merkley move and others have only heard that Mulvaney believes the Army Corps has too many other projects to address to commit time on housing issues. That claim is not only offensive, it's off-base.

Army Corps regularly takes on housing issues, including as recently as September when its engineers helped plan and deliver temporary housing for Texans affected by Hurricane Harvey.

But the Corps doesn't just jump in to help in disaster situations. According to its own website, the Corps' recent years has built nearly 50 child care centers, about 38,000 permanent barracks and 1,200 family housing units. Most notably, the Corps jumped on projects decades ago to rebuild housing for the people who lost their homes in the predominantly white towns flooded out by the levee and John Day dams. That included about \$35 million spent to re-create the town of North Bonneville, including replacing streets, a sewage system and electrical connections.

This isn't a question of capacity or know-how. This project is about the government finally holding up its end of a bargain that's been delayed for far too long.

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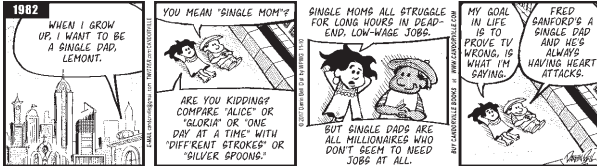
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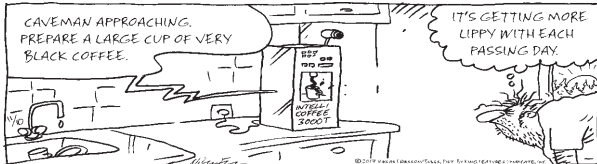
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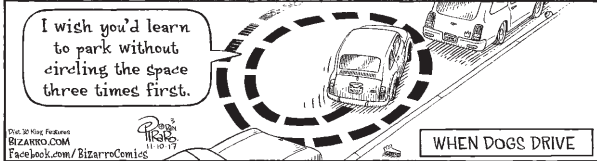
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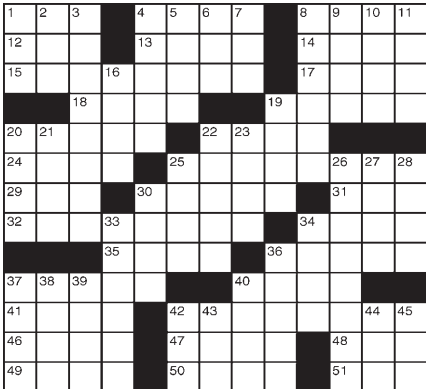
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- Japanese sash
- Twitches
- Pile
- Campaigned
- Medicinal plant
- Lighten
- Solvency source
- Say it's so
- Lummoxes
- Coffee add-in
- Sluggish Sosa
- Quarrel
- Christian Andersen
- Daytime TV fare
- "Entourage" role
- Daphnis' love
- de-France
- London airport
- Lure

DOWN

- Tolkien monster subject
- Sheepish remark
- Inability to sleep
- Stretchy candy
- Misfortunes
- Bill's partner
- Stitch
- Vital organs
- Roof overhang
- Cruising
- Salon request
- Easter entrees
- Birthday party must-have
- Persian bigwig
- Swiss river
- Stylist's shop
- Oxen's burden
- Drive— window
- 26 Longfellow
- 27 Actress Lena
- 28 Saturates
- 30 Grub
- 33 Govt. securities
- 34 Afrikaner
- 36 From Athens
- 37 Soother
- 38 Lamb alias
- 39 Barn storage area
- 40 Wood-shaping tool
- 42 Ref
- 43 Scot's refusal
- 44 French "yes"
- 45 Marry

Answer to Previous Puzzle



11-10

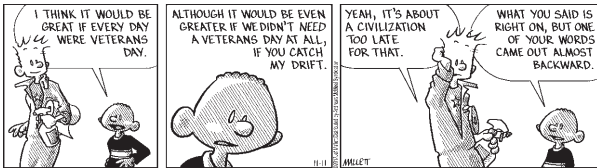
CRYPTOQUIP

FL KLD JPCZO FLQ LYZSNU
XDUJ OSSG JPSCN GSJU
RNLX YVZFSNCZQ LRR? JPVJ

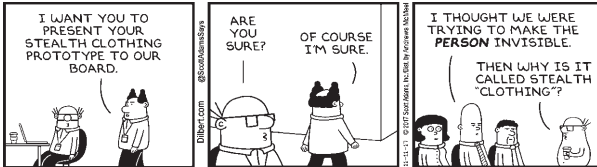
QLSU YCJPLDJ UJNVKZCQ.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE PIG WANTED TO STORE SOME LARGE BOTTLES AND BARRELS, SO HE PLACED THEM IN HIS SWINE CELLAR.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals W

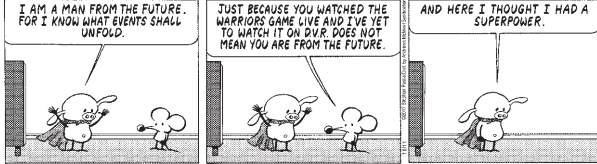
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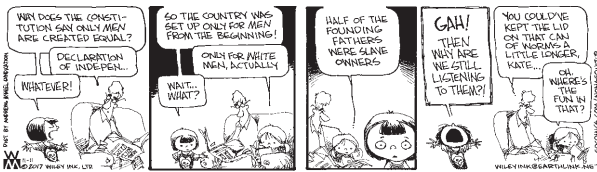
Dilbert



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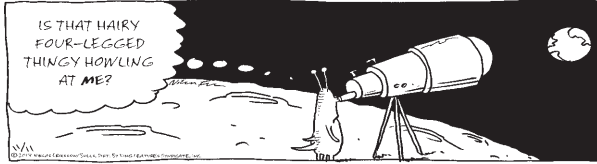
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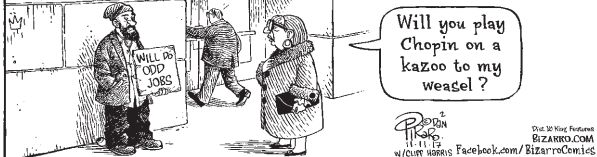
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Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15					16					17		
18					19				20			
			21	22			23	24				
25	26	27					28			29	30	31
32							33					
34							35	36				
			37				38					
39	40	41			42	43			44	45	46	47
48				49					50			
51				52					53			
54				55					56			

ACROSS

- 1 Detail
- 5 Vagrant
- 9 "Tasty!"
- 12 Facts and figures
- 13 Verbal
- 14 World Cup cheer
- 15 Hotel chain
- 16 Bruins' sch.
- 17 Dapper fellow
- 18 Bridge
- 19 Squealer
- 20 Wizard's prop
- 21 Cardinal cap
- 23 401(k) alternative
- 25 Kitchen adjunct
- 26 Tabloid subjects
- 32 Trumpet noise
- 33 Milk dispenser
- 34 Irish singer
- 36 False
- 37 Oklahoma city
- 38 Cariou of Broadway
- 39 Speed
- 42 "Veep" airer
- 44 Flamingo's color
- 48 Prince
- 49 Imperfection
- 50 Classic theaters
- 51 Court divider

- 52 Old Italian money
- 53 Astronaut
- 54 "— hoo!"
- 55 Lawn party site
- 56 Hamlet, e.g.

- 22 Tire pattern
- 24 Waste not
- 25 "Downton Abbey" channel
- 26 Foreman foe
- 27 A Bobbsey twin
- 29 Sch. URL ender
- 30 Nap site
- 31 "No seats"
- 35 Showy flower
- 36 Turned the soil
- 39 Madcap
- 40 Black-and-white cookie
- 41 Aware of
- 43 Comic Roseanne
- 45 Notion
- 46 Dresden denial
- 47 Hardy cabbage
- 49 Aviate

DOWN

- 1 Nuptial vows
- 2 Pack (down)
- 3 Sicilian spouter
- 4 Not on the fringe
- 5 Every 60 minutes
- 6 Killer whale
- 7 Sea off Poland
- 8 Slang suffix
- 9 Luke's teacher
- 10 — Bator
- 11 Repair
- 20 Site of Thoreau's cabin

Answer to Previous Puzzle

O	B	I	T	I	C	S	H	E	A	P
R	A	N	A	L	O	E	E	A	S	E
C	A	S	H	F	L	O	W	A	V	E
		O	A	F	S		C	R	E	A
S	A	M	M	Y		S	P	A	T	
H	A	N	S		T	A	L	K	S	H
A	R	I		C	H	L	O	E		I
H	E	A	T	H	R	O	W		B	A
			N	O	U	N		G	O	W
B	E	L	O				A	R	E	A
A	L	O	T		U	N	D	E	R	T
L	I	F	E		M	A	Z	E		H
M	A	T	S		P	E	E	K		A

11-11

CRYPTOQUIP

N B U X M H N F L K U N O H K V ' C
K N M N C L V B X V G E X V E Q X
G W Q Q K W C E V C F P X G V B X
K W U : F K X F H X O F A - G W B C F
C X O F B A .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: DO YOU THINK DOG OWNERS MUST KEEP THEIR PETS FROM WANDERING OFF? THAT GOES WITHOUT STRAYING.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals S

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Vol. 1—No. 241

1 Fr.

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Sunday, March 25, 1945

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HIGH SCHOOL: DODEA EUROPE

ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

Girls tennis: Catherine Gulihur, Vicenza

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

It didn't take long for Catherine Gulihur to make an impact on DODEA Europe tennis.

The newly arrived senior ace of the Vicenza Cougars joined the organization's elite immediately upon her debut, playing her way to a top seed in October's European tournament. Once there, she stormed through preliminary play and the semifinals, dropping just one game in six matches, and seized the 2017 DODEA Europe girls singles championship with a straight-set 6-2, 6-0 triumph.

Now, Gulihur's fleeting but memorable DODEA Europe career includes the Stars and Stripes girls tennis Athlete of the Year award.

The freshly crowned champion plans to celebrate her remarkable success the same way she earned that success in the first place.

"Now that the season is over I can get some more hours on the court," Gulihur said.

That's an unsurprising response for the coaches, teammates and opponents that have gotten to know Gulihur, who had been homeschooled before enrolling at Vicenza.

"Catherine has a singular focus on being an elite level college tennis player and eventually a pro tennis player," Vicenza coach Mark Gillett said.

That's the next phase for Gulihur, who has been scouted by high-level NCAA programs and competes on the European pro circuit. While full of possibilities, that future has yet to take shape.

"It's a tough decision, and looking forward I just have to find the balance between academics...and getting enough time on the court," Gulihur said.

Remarkably, Gulihur found time for another worthy endeavor this fall even as she competed for a European championship, adjusted to a new school and planned ahead for a bright future. She was also a good teammate. Gillett said Gulihur was "an asset" to the program as she helped



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

less accomplished players with "tactical instruction," all while remembering to have fun with the experience.

"While normally Catherine is intensely focused on her game, she was able to relax and enjoy herself at practice each day with the team," Gulihur said.

Even with just two short months to record it, Gulihur's DODEA Europe legacy is secure

"I have coached tennis for 16 years in DODEA and have seen a few highly successful tennis players," Gillett said. "I have not coached an athlete of this level."

broome.gregory@stripes.com
Twitter: @broomestripes

Girls golf: Jasmin Acker, Kaiserslautern

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

Along with its drives, chips and putts, Kaiserslautern senior Jasmin Acker has become proficient at the mental aspect of golf.

Acker plays with a remarkable blend of intensity and affability. She makes note of her own mistakes, but treats each new tee shot as a fresh opportunity. She responds fiercely to competition, but is endlessly complimentary of her beaten opponents and genuinely flustered when her success is recognized.

And there's a lot of success to be recognized. This fall, Acker won her third consecutive DODEA Europe girls golf championship, and now is the Stars and Stripes girls golf Athlete of the Year for the third straight year.

True to form, Acker had a few gentle critiques of her own performance even as she celebrated her latest achievement.

"There were a few things that could have been better," Acker said. "There are a few putts that I definitely should have made.

"But I can't complain."

Complaints would only undermine the steady optimism she's cultivated on the course, which fueled her triumphant send-off this fall.

"I felt really comfortable," Acker said. "I

wasn't stressed or anything."

It helps that Acker has competed on a clearly higher level than the rest of the DODEA Europe field for the last two seasons, representing the second half of her high school career.

As a freshman, Acker made a promising debut at the European tournament but fell well short of Wiesbaden's Jenna Eidem as the senior claimed the fourth and final title of her reign.

Acker wasn't a clear favorite as a sophomore, instead engaged in an evenly matched standoff with Bitburg rival Leigha Daryanani that started with a duel for second place the year before. But Acker earned a four-point win for her first European title, and followed that up with runaway wins as a junior and senior. Acker won this year's championship by a 19-point margin.

Looking back over her career, Acker found it hard to believe that that promising freshman had turned into a dominant champion.

"I didn't think I'd do this three times," Acker said. "I'm happy that I got to finish it off like that."

broome.gregory@stripes.com
Twitter: @broomestripes

Boys tennis: Mathias Mingazzini, Marymount

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

After sweeping the 2016 DODEA Europe boys tennis championship match, Marymount star Mathias Mingazzini had an ominous message for his future challengers.

"I look forward to coming back next year," Mingazzini said.

He did just that, with predictably similar results. Mingazzini swept the 2017 DODEA Europe boys tennis championship match in October for his second straight European singles title. As a result, he is the Stars and Stripes boys tennis Athlete of the Year for the second consecutive season.

And he's not done yet. Mingazzini expects to be back again next year to complete the trilogy.

That's bad news for any rivals with designs on DODEA Europe's top prize. Mingazzini is only getting more dominant.

Mingazzini, again the bracket's top-seeded player, swept to this year's title by a 6-2, 6-1 margin, improving on the previous year's 6-1, 6-4 score.

Remarkably, that substantial victory was the closest match he played in the tournament; Mingazzini dropped just five combined games across five preliminary matches and a semifinal.

The final match wasn't as easy for Mingazzini as the score would seem to suggest. SHAPE contender Noah Banken made him work for every point; it's just that Mingazzini, as he usually is in DODEA Europe tennis, was up to the challenge.

"I think this one (is better) because I needed a strong mentality because my opponent was so good," he said. "I think today I just pushed the ball as hard as I could, and I'm satisfied with how I played."

That kind of good-natured approach to the game is well-known in Italian tennis circles. While he's ruthlessly efficient in closing out opponents on the court, Mingazzini is equally generous with his time and talents.

"Mathias is an outstanding young man,"



Vicenza coach Mark Gillett said. "Always very friendly and positive with players from other teams and always willing to help out a beginner player."

Gillett also noted that Mingazzini came back from his 2016 title a better player, testament to his year-round competition schedule and work ethic.

"He is dedicated to the sport," Gillett said. "I was surprised at how much his game improved this year."

One can only imagine what Mingazzini will bring to the DODEA-Europe courts next year.

broome.gregory@stripes.com
Twitter: @broomestripes

Boys golf: Kaden Senkbeil, Kaiserslautern

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

Kaden Senkbeil had to strike a difficult balance as he competed for the 2017 DODEA Europe boys golf championship.

On one hand, the Kaiserslautern junior wanted to build on strong past performances and continue his career trajectory of steady improvement.

On the other, he had a regular season full of disappointing efforts that he didn't want weighing him down.

Suffice it to say, he found the balance. Senkbeil became the European boys golf champion, as well as the 2017 Stars and Stripes boys golf Athlete of the Year.

"He just kind of brought it all together," Kaiserslautern coach Chris Grogan said.

Senkbeil has been a steady presence in DODEA Europe golf throughout high school. He ranked in the middle of the pack at the European finals as a freshman in 2015. As a sophomore, he leaped up the leaderboard for a fourth-place finish, but still fell off the pace set by departing, four-time champion Jordan Holfield of Stuttgart.

The window of opportunity flew wide

open this fall as Senkbeil joined fellow rising stars Bryan Cortese of Wiesbaden and Jonathan Ciero of Ramstein on the short list of potential champions. But the scores Senkbeil produced, including a 34-point Stableford points showing and a double-digit loss to Ciero on Sept. 23, weren't those of a champion in waiting.

Thus Senkbeil entered the Oct. 12 championship meet with a conflicting mission statement - to let go of the past while seizing a title that has been years in the making.

"After the regular season, I just let all those scores drop out of my head," Senkbeil said. "I didn't want to remember them."

Instead, Senkbeil replaced them with better scores. He shot a solid 38 on day one to take a one-point lead over Ciero, and improved further on day two with a 42-point effort that was good for a six-point overall victory.

"I came into this saying, 'It's a new round of golf,'" Senkbeil said as he celebrated his championship. "Just play the game you know how to play."

broome.gregory@stripes.com
Twitter: @broomestripes

HIGH SCHOOL: DODEA PACIFIC

ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

Volleyball: Britney Bailey, Yokota

By DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

NYOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan
o sooner had the last spike of
Britney Bailey's high school
career come thundering
down to the floor, than a
cascade of emotions washed over her.

Happy that her Yokota team had repeated as Far East Division II Tournament champions. But sad, she said, that her four years on the volleyball court were finished.

"Conflicted," the Panthers senior middle blocker said on Tuesday, three days after Yokota capped a 29-8 season by beating Christian Academy Japan in the final.

"I felt good, that we had accomplished our goals, but I was like, 'I'm so empty. I don't want it to end. My last point. I'm done playing in high school.' First word I thought of, 'depressed.'"

"It was a surreal moment," said first-year Yokota coach Byron Wrenn, also realizing that his premier spikeer would no longer don No. 23 in Panther blue and gold.

Bailey averaged 10.3 kills and 2.6 blocks over the course of a 37-match season in which Yokota won 81 of 117 sets. In the D-II title match, Bailey

had 23 kills and eight block points.

For that, plus earning D-II Most Valuable Player honors, Bailey has been named Stars and Stripes' Pacific high school volleyball Athlete of the Year.

More than the numbers, it was the feeling of confidence Bailey gave others on the court, knowing their "go-to" player was on the floor who could finish plays with authority.

"I love it," said sophomore setter Kyra Anderson, who averaged 18.6 assists during the season. The two, Anderson said, shared a synergy; as she would set the ball, she'd gaze at Bailey, then hear her yell, "Yes! Yes! And you know she's doing to do it."

"I like that role," Bailey said. "It makes me play better and it pushes me to be that person."

Yet Bailey deflects much of the credit to her teammates and coach. "I couldn't finish without the set," Bailey said. "The other five players, they're very important, extra eyes, communicating, even if you don't get to touch the ball."

The season low point was a slump during last month's American School In Japan YUJO III tournament, in which the Panthers lost a season-high nine straight sets.

From there, the Panthers dropped one set — the second — in the final against CAJ. And the fourth set stayed nip-and-tuck and provided what Wrenn called a "telling moment" in Bailey's career.

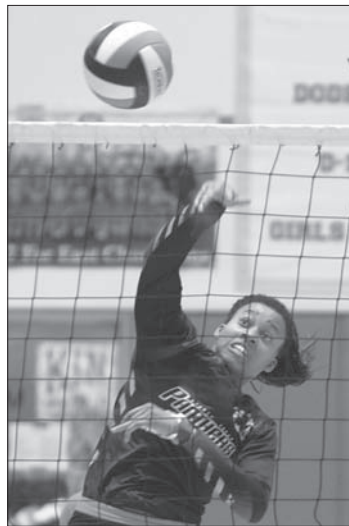
Though Bailey has always been a quiet leader, at that juncture, "you could see, she was thinking, it's not going to work if I'm quiet," Wrenn said. "She put the team on her back, her words backing her play and her play backing her words, and she brought it home."

Once play ended and awards were handed out, Wrenn, Anderson and Bailey recalled walking back to their quarters, rain and wind from oncoming Typhoon Saola drenching them, but they said they hardly felt it.

"Reflecting on the goals we'd set in August," Wrenn said. "Beating ASIJ for the first time in 14 years, winning (Pac-East), repeating Far East, and individual goals that fell in line with the team goals. It was raining, but it wasn't raining."

"It was like a movie ending," Bailey said.

ornaauer.dave@stripes.com
Twitter @ornaauer_stripes



Football: Owen Williams, Humphreys

By DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

They call him, "Thor," for a number of reasons in Humphreys football country.

Partly because of the mane jutting from underneath Owen Williams' helmet. Definitely the loud cracking of pads when the Blackhawks senior moves in for one of his team-leading 104 tackles.

But as the team captain, Williams rarely cracked thunder, but resonated helpful.

He and his coaches say he has much more of a role to play than just racking up big on-field numbers, more than helping the team win and achieve its first Far East Division II title.

"Thor has been a leader both on and off the field," said coach Steve Elliott on Monday, nine days after Williams helped the Blackhawks capture that title 39-0 over Matthew C. Perry. It averaged a 20-10 loss 15 days earlier and the 44-6 loss at Perry in the 2016 D-II final.

Williams was key to that effort, especially on defense, where 18 of his team-high 104 tackles came for losses, and he recovered four fumbles. He caught 22 passes for 327 yards and seven touch-downs. "On the field, Thor was the heart of our team," Elliott said.

"He was always the first one on the field for practice and the last one to leave. Never one to lay blame, he was always the first to congratulate teammates on a great play and give a reassuring pat on the shoulder pads when a mistake was made," Elliott said.

Williams was also important in setting the example in the classroom. He maintained 3.5 GPA.

"Not only has he maintained his grades, he has also assisted his teammates in maintaining theirs," Elliott said. During study halls, Williams

could be found "assisting teammates with problems ... or breaking down lessons in a way that teammates could understand them."

For all his work on the gridiron and in school, Williams has been named Stars and Stripes Pacific football Athlete of the Year.

Williams said he understood those responsibilities and did his best to handle.

"You have a team captain, he has to take responsibility, helping out others with things that matter most," Williams said. "Give them information that would help them. Keep spreading that wealth, help them if they needed help with anything."

That 38-point defeat at Perry on Nov. 5, 2016, still gnawed inside, said the Blackhawks' senior leader. But he also wanted to ensure his teammates would work one week at a time and not look too far ahead.

"We got our teeth kicked in," he said.

"That was a bad feeling. We had to make up for it. Focusing on one game every week, it was pretty difficult. Everybody wanted a piece of them (Perry) to show the people in the Pacific we could take those guys on."

A season sweep of Daegu put the Blackhawks in position to accomplish that dream. When the final whistle blew on the last play of the D-II final, Williams said he felt more relieved than anything else.

"So many emotions," he said. "I knew we could do it. Yes, we finally proved it. We came to do what we did. Excited, started to tear up. It was bittersweet, my last high school game. A lot of people dream about going out champions and to do that, it was heartwarming."

ornaauer.dave@stripes.com
Twitter @ornaauer_stripes

NBA/NHL



RICH PEDRONCELL/AP

Oklahoma City forward Paul George, center, drives to the basket between Kings guard Bogdan Bogdanovic, left, and center Zach Randolph on Tuesday in Sacramento, Calif. The Thunder lost 94-87 to the Kings, and are off to an 0-5 start against conference foes.

Mixed results

Early returns on offseason moves promising for Rockets, T-Wolves, less so for Thunder

By BRIAN MAHONEY

Associated Press

Houston, Minnesota and Oklahoma City were the three Western Conference teams that loaded up for runs at Golden State in the summer.

So far, so good for the Rockets and Timberwolves. "They're good. Both of those teams are really good," Charlotte coach Steve Clifford said.

So is Boston, which also made big changes over the summer and is an NBA-best 9-2 with nine straight victories despite losing Gordon Hayward for the season in his opener.

The Thunder are going to need a little longer.

The Rockets (8-3) are tied with the Warriors atop the West, with the Wolves (7-3) just a half-game back and riding their first five-game winning streak since early 2009 into their game at Golden State on Wednesday night.

Way down toward the bottom of the West standings were the Thunder, who are just 4-6 with three straight losses after falling 94-86 in Sacramento on Tuesday.

Even though they've barely had Chris Paul on the floor, the Rockets' other acquisitions, including Luke Mbah a Moute and PJ Tucker, have given them more versatile players who can defend multiple positions. And James Harden is perhaps the NBA's most dangerous offensive player, ranking in the top three in scoring and assists.

In Minnesota, newcomers Jimmy Butler, Jeff Teague and Jamal Crawford have provided multiple scoring around Karl-Anthony Towns and Andrew Wiggins, even though they're rolling even without yet playing typical Tom Thibodeau defense. They are four games over .500 for the first time since 2007.

Clifford's team has seen both ends close. The Rockets routed the Hornets 109-93 and the Wolves

beat Charlotte 112-94.

"I would say this: To have a chance against Golden State, you have to be able to score. Those two teams really can score," Clifford said.

"(The Wolves) are playing four guys out there that can make you look bad all the time and then they bring Crawford off the bench. They have firepower plus they execute, and then Houston obviously, especially once they get their guys back, they're similar."

Oklahoma City's defense has been excellent, just behind Boston for fewest points per game in the league, but the offense isn't where it will probably get to after adding Carmelo Anthony and Paul George, who combined to go 8-for-33 in Sacramento. The Thunder started 0-5 in conference play and blew an 18-point halftime lead in a loss to Boston.

"It's good to struggle now. This is our first year together," George told reporters after that game.

"It's a long run. We'll be fine."

Games to watch:

■ **Miami at Utah, Friday.** Better hope the outside shots are falling, because it won't be easy to get anything inside with Rudy Gobert and Hassan Whiteside around.

■ **Memphis at Houston, Saturday.** The Grizzlies already won two victories over the Rockets.

■ **Lakers at Milwaukee, Saturday.** Lonzo Ball has frequently been compared to Jason Kidd, and now he plays against Kidd's team that has added Eric Bledsoe in a trade with Phoenix.

Stat line of the week

Kristaps Porzingis, New York: With a career-high 40 points, eight rebounds and six blocked shots on Sunday against Indiana, the 7-foot-3 forward became the first Knicks player with at least 40 points, five rebounds and five blocks since Patrick Ewing on March 7, 1995, against Boston.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	10	2	.833	
Toronto	6	4	.600	3
Philadelphia	6	4	.600	3
New York	6	5	.545	3½
Brooklyn	5	5	.500	5½
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	7	4	.636	—
Washington	6	5	.550	1
Charlotte	6	6	.500	2
Miami	2	6	.250	5
Atlanta	2	6	.250	5
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	3	3	.727	—
Cleveland	5	6	.455	3
Indiana	4	6	.400	4
Milwaukee	4	6	.400	3½
Chicago	2	7	.222	5

Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	8	3	.727	—
Memphis	7	4	.636	1
San Antonio	6	5	.545	2
New Orleans	6	5	.545	2
Dallas	2	10	.167	6½
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	7	4	.636	—
Portland	6	5	.545	1
Denver	6	5	.545	1
Utah	4	6	.400	2½
Oklahoma City	4	6	.400	2½
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	5	3	.750	—
L.A. Clippers	5	5	.500	3½
Phoenix	4	4	.500	3
Sacramento	4	3	.556	2

Tuesday's games				
Cleveland 124, Milwaukee 119				
Boston 107, L.A. Lakers 99				
New Orleans 117, Indiana 112				
New York 118, Charlotte 104				
Toronto 119, Chicago 114				
San Antonio 120, L.A. Clippers 107				
Detroit 112, Brooklyn 104				
Philadelphia 104, Utah 97				
Memphis 98, Portland 97				
Sacramento 94, Oklahoma City 86				
Detroit 114, Indiana 93				
Orlando 112, New York 99				
Dallas 125, Minnesota 101				
Miami 126, Phoenix 115				

Thursday's games				
L.A. Lakers at Washington				
New Orleans at Toronto				
Cleveland at Houston				
Philadelphia at Sacramento				
Oklahoma City at Denver				

Saturday's games				
Atlanta at Detroit				
Charlotte at Boston				
Atlanta at Chicago				
L.A. Clippers at Oklahoma City				
Miami at Utah				
Milwaukee at San Antonio				
Orlando at Phoenix				
Brooklyn at Portland				

Sunday's games				
Atlanta at Washington				
L.A. Clippers at New Orleans				
Memphis at Houston				
Sacramento at San Antonio				
Cleveland at Dallas				
L.A. Lakers at Milwaukee				
Philadelphia at Golden State				
Brooklyn at Utah				
Minnesota at Phoenix				
Orlando at Denver				

Friday's games				
Toronto at Boston				
Miami at Detroit				
San Antonio at Indiana				
Dallas at Oklahoma City				

Leaders				
THROUGH NOVEMBER 8				
Scoring	FG	FT	PTS	AVG

Antetokounmpo, MIL	101	110	125	31.9
Porzingis, NYK	101	110	61	30.0
Cousins, NOR	104	72	120	13.6
Curry, GSW	111	106	78	28.9
Lillard, POR	125	82	118	28.9
Davis, NOR	101	70	284	28.4
Lillard, POR	11	86	263	25.7
Curry, GSW	11	96	272	24.4
Beal, WAS	10	90	54	25.4
Durant, OKC	11	86	235	23.2
DeRozan, TOR	10	79	74	23.9
McCollum, MEM	10	86	225	22.5
Gordon, HOU	10	72	48	23.1
Oladipo, IND	12	96	53	22.8
Griffin, LAC	11	81	114	10.4

Rebounds				
DET	DET	TOT	AVG	
Drummond, DET	11	55	113	16.5
Jordan, LAC	10	54	89	14.3
Cousins, NOR	11	24	126	13.4
Howard, CHA	11	47	99	14.6
Griffin, LAC	10	31	72	12.6
Jokic, DEN	11	27	101	12.6
Towns, MIN	11	28	93	12.1
Drummond, DET	12	81	119	10.6
Capela, HOU	11	33	84	11.7
Gobert, UTA	11	81	114	10.4

Assists				
W	W	AST	AVG	
Westbrook, OKC	10	109	10.9	
Harden, HOU	11	97	10.8	
Curry, GSW	11	107	9.7	
James, CLE	11	110	9.1	
Drummond, DET	11	107	9.7	
Simmons, PHI	10	80	8.0	
Collins, IND	12	62	6.8	
Drummond, DET	11	61	6.8	
Grant, CHI	9	61	6.8	
Green, GOL	12	80	6.7	

No 'D' in faceoff?

By STEPHEN WHYNO

Associated Press

Well, this is awkward. Stricter rule enforcement in the National Hockey League has led to more defensemen taking draws this season and, well, it has been a challenge—ever for some of the best players in the world.

"It's a little bit unnatural," Arizona Coyotes defenseman Luke Schenn said. "It's not something you see all the time. You see a D-man go in there, you're probably not going to win too many of them."

Such is life for NHL defensemen these days, thrown into the faceoff circle to do something they never figured was in their job description. Like position players taking the mound to pitch in a Major League Baseball game or NFL running backs having to throw a pass, defensemen aren't accustomed to taking faceoffs and almost never work on it in practice. But this season, defensemen are finding themselves in unfamiliar territory much more often as officials order forwards out of the circle for failing to follow the protocol.

Faceoffs are one of the most tactical elements in hockey, a chess match played out over a couple of seconds between players who have spent much of their lives perfecting their craft to win possession of the puck. Blindingly fast work with sticks and leverage are key. It's no place for bigger defensemen with their longer sticks, most of whom are far more comfortable handling the puck once it's won back to them.

Eleven different defensemen have taken a faceoff so far this season and 64 since 3-on-3 over-time was instituted in 2015-16. No matter how many times it happens or how awkward, it's on the highlight reel and becomes the subject of ribbing from teammates.

"They're going to give you a hard time because they know it's not something you do all the time," Calgary Flames defenseman Michael Stone said. "If you do win one, it's pure excitement. I think, from everybody."

Defensemen have been involved in 92 faceoffs over the past two-plus seasons and have won only about a third of them. Maybe a few of the unlikely victories have come from being underestimated.

"It's funny that when you get a D-man in, a lot of times those centermen relax and the D-men are all-in," said Capitals coach Barry Trotz, who recently was pressed into duty. "There's a lot of cheers that go on when a defenseman goes on there and wins a draw."

Victor Hedman of the Tampa Bay Lightning is 6-foot-6 and a Norris Trophy finalist as one of the best defensemen in the league. He recently was pressed into faceoff duty on a penalty kill in overtime. No pressure, right? Hedman put his stick down, beat Columbus center Nick Foligno and is now a perfect 1-for-1. He was stunned.

"The guys were probably as shocked as I was that I actually won it," Hedman said. "I could

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	OT	Pts
Tampa Bay	12	10	7	2
Toronto	17	10	7	2
Winnipeg	10	7	0	20
Montreal	16	8	7	1
Detroit	16	8	7	1
Washington	16	8	7	1
Florida	16	8	7	1
Buffalo	15	8	7	1
Carolina	14	8	7	1
Metropolitan Division				
	W	L	OT	Pts
Pittsburgh	14	9	4	1
New York	14	9	4	1
Philadelphia	14	9	4	1
N.Y. Islanders	18	5	2	18
N.Y. Rangers	17	8	7	1
Washington	18	7	2	18
Philadelphia	15	7	6	2
Carolina	13	9	3	3

Western Conference				
Central Division				
	W	L	OT	Pts
St. Louis	16	12	3	1
Minnesota	15	6	1	25
Nashville	15	8	2	18
Colorado	14	8	2	18
Dallas	18	8	0	18
Chicago	15	7	6	2
Minnesota	14	8	2	10
Pacific Division				
	W	L	OT	Pts
Los Angeles	15	9	5	1
Vegas	15	9	5	1
San Jose	14	8	6	1
Calgary	15	8	7	1
Edmonton	14	9	7	1
San Jose	14	9	7	1
San Jose	14	9	7	1

Note: Two points for a win, one point for an overtime or shootout win in each division and two wild card per conference advance to playoffs.

Toronto 4, Minnesota 2
Edmonton 4, Boston 3
Tampa Bay 5, San Jose 1

Thursday's games
Edmonton at New Jersey
Chicago at Philadelphia

Friday's games
Ottawa at Colorado
Boston at Toronto

Saturday's games
Edmonton at Montreal
Toronto at Boston

Sunday's games
Minnesota at Philadelphia
Chicago at Carolina

Monday's games
N.Y. Islanders at St. Louis
Pittsburgh at Nashville

Tuesday's games
Winnipeg at Arizona
Vancouver at San Jose

Wednesday's games
New Jersey at Chicago
Edmonton at Washington

Thursday's games
Tampa Bay at Anaheim
San Jose at Los Angeles

probably not do it again. I guess my timing was perfect in that moment."

Call it perfect timing, that luck or call it whatever you want. Stone's work led to more success in his career but still remembers losing his first faceoff and getting mad about it.

Of course, Boychuk has put "zero" practice time into it and has a simple, albeit ugly, strategy. "You just try to make sure you're not getting hit, at least, and smack it to the wall. Tell the person that you're going to try to shoot it to."

After years of practicing against his brother Mark, a forward for the Ottawa Senators, Stone's work led to more success in his career but still remembers losing his first faceoff and getting mad about it.

"I'm mostly just playing not to get beat clean," Stone said. "I'm not looking to win a faceoff clean, especially on that kind of a play. You just try not to get beat clean, do whatever you can to kind of push that in the direction of your guys."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Notre Dame-Miami: Strengths intersect

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

For Notre Dame and Miami, it is strength versus strength.

Notre Dame has one of the nation's best rushing offenses and nearly twice as many touchdowns on the ground as it did last season. Miami's undefeated start and re-emergence in the national picture has been fueled by a defensive front seven that likes to describe itself as violent.

So when No. 3 Notre Dame (8-1) visits No. 7 Miami (8-0) for a nationally televised showdown between longtime rival programs on Saturday night, that matchup will likely tell the tale of who emerges with its national-title hopes still looking realistic.

"It's an outstanding front four," Notre Dame coach Brian Kelly said about Miami. "The linebackers run and tackle as well as any group that we've played. ... They can play a number of different coverages by keeping three linebackers on the field and that's pretty hard to do today in college football. A unique skill-set in that group."

Mark Richt
Miami coach

Kelly spent much of his weekly news conference Tuesday raving about the Hurricanes' defense. In Coral Gables, Miami's Mark Richt offered similar sentiments about the Irish offense.

"Their offensive line, probably the best in America," Richt said. "I don't think very many people would argue that. ... Very experienced but very, very talented. They're paving the way, over 300 yards per game rushing and this isn't triple-option football."



NAM Y. HUN/AP

Notre Dame offensive linemen Mike McGlinchey, left, and Quentin Nelson are part of a unit that is helping the Irish run for more than 300 yards a game this season.

This is just line up and physically move people off the ball, a kick-your-tail type of offensive line and great runners."

Notre Dame has rushed for at least 318 yards in each of its past five games. The Irish already have nearly 1,000 more yards on the ground this season through nine games than they did in all of last season. Only one team has slowed the Irish ground

game in 2017 — and it was Georgia, Richt's former school.

This current school now has to figure out a way to do what the Bulldogs did. If the Hurricanes succeed on that front and extend the nation's longest current winning streak to 14 games, there will be a bit of symmetry that will put all of 2016's disappointments to rest for good.

In a four-game span last season, Miami lost to Florida State, North Carolina, Virginia Tech and Notre Dame — in that order. The Hurricanes now have a shot at going 4-0 against those teams this season, winning in the same order as they lost a year ago.

"It's really been a payback season to everybody that we lost to last season and we're just working down the line," Miami linebacker Sheaquil Quarterman said. "We just can't wait to line it up Saturday. We're preparing right now so on Saturday we can fly around all day."

Miami's defense has bent from time to time this season against the run, but rarely breaks. The Hurricanes are giving up 3.9 yards per carry, yet have yielded only four rushing touchdowns — tied for fourth-fewest in the nation. Notre Dame leads the nation at 7.0 yards per carry, and its 34 rushing TDs is tied for second-most among FBS teams (one behind Florida Atlantic).

"I think when we broke through with over 500 yards rushing against Boston College, I think that that was really where everything started to kind of show itself, that this is who we were going to be," Kelly said. "And then it's certainly taken shape from there."

Georgia held Notre Dame to 55 yards rushing in Week 2, a one-point win and the only blemish on the Fighting Irish schedule. A week later, Notre Dame ran for 515 yards in Boston College. Like Kelly said, it's been rolling since.

Miami understands the challenge.

"Us versus them," linebacker Zach McCloud said. "We've got to man up and do what we've got to do."

Kelly said top running back Josh Adams, who had only five carries last week against Wake Forest, and quarterback Brandon Wimshut have no injury-related concerns heading into this week. "There are no concerns about their readiness and what their physical stature is for going into the game," Kelly said.



SAM CRAFT/AP

Auburn linebacker Tre Williams reacts after stopping Texas A&M running back Trayvon Williams on Saturday.

By JOHN ZENOR
Associated Press

AUBURN, Ala. — The Auburn Tigers can really crash the playoff party.

Who knows, the 10th-ranked Tigers might end up even receiving an invite. When you play the nation's top two teams — No. 2 Georgia and No. 1 Alabama in The Associated Press poll — in your final Southeastern Conference games, you can really spruce up that résumé, after all.

And at the same time, the Tigers could put a blemish on the records of the only two SEC teams without one.

"It's real cool," Auburn safety Tray Matthews said Tuesday. "We're in a great spot. We've got the No. 1 and No. 2 teams at our place. It doesn't get any better than that."

Win both and avoid a colossal misstep against Louisiana-Monroe in between, and the Tigers (7-2, 5-1 SEC) will play in Atlanta for a league title, again against the Bulldogs (9-0, 6-0, SEC East champion Georgia is No. 1 in the College Football Rankings, Alabama is No. 2 and Auburn 10th).

Loss both and Auburn's promising season crumbles with a poor finish again. The Tigers have lost to their two biggest rivals in each of the past three seasons.

"We're in a great spot. We've got the No. 1 and No. 2 teams at our place. It doesn't get any better than that."

Tray Matthews
Auburn safety

Coach Gus Malzahn is 1-8 against Top 10 teams dating to the 2013 national championship game. The Tigers are just 2½-point underdogs this week.

"I think that you've got to embrace the fact that you're playing the No. 1 or 2 team in the country on your home field," Malzahn said. "Our goal is to win the SEC championship and it has been since Day One. This is the next step, and it's a great opportunity for us. So it's a big game."

"We're not looking any farther ahead than Saturday. This is a game we've been looking forward to. It's here, and there's a lot on the line for it. It's a good one."

Auburn has rebounded nicely since blowing a big lead in a loss to LSU, winning at Arkansas 52-20 and at Texas A&M 42-27.

Now, plenty of eyes will be turned toward Jordan-Hare Stadium, if largely because of the upcoming opponents. Auburn could be playing the role of playoff spoiler.

"That's not something that we can think about or that we have time to think about," tailback Kerryon Johnson said. "If we lose this week, the college football world won't care anything about us. So we just have to go out there and play this Saturday like it's our last game. We've got to keep this thing rolling. That's what we plan to do."

Auburn is seeking some redemption in this one, especially offensively. Georgia won last year's meeting 13-7 on two field goals and an interception return for a touchdown. The Tigers managed just 164 total yards and 37 passing yards.

As an old offensive coordinator, the loss was particularly galling to Matthews.

"Obviously last year was an extremely tough loss, the fact that they won the game and didn't have an offensive touchdown," he said. "This is one we've been waiting on. I know our players and our coaches are excited about it, and it's a great opportunity for us and for our program, playing one of the best teams on our home field."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Jake Fromm QB | Georgia

The freshman will almost certainly have to make some plays with the Auburn defense likely leading up to stop the run. The league's No. 2-rated passer also has to continue to avoid major mistakes. Saturday's matchup appears to be the last potential stumbling block on the road to a perfect regular season for the Bulldogs and an expected showdown with No. 1 Alabama for the SEC title.

No. 2 Georgia at No. 10 Auburn

9:30 p.m. Saturday, CET

5:30 a.m. Sunday, JKT, AFN-Sports



SUE OGOROCK/AP

Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield (6) leaps over Iowa State defensive back De'Monte Ruth, bottom, in a game last month. The outright lead in the Big 12 Conference is on the line when the No. 5 Sooners host No. 8 TCU on Saturday (2 a.m. Sunday CET, 10 a.m. Sunday JKT, AFN-Atlantic).

THE POWER CONFERENCES

Big 12

Big Ten

East

Conf.	W	L	Conf.	W	L
Michigan St.	5	1	7	2	2
Ohio St.	5	2	7	2	2
Penn St.	4	2	7	2	2
Michigan	4	2	7	2	2
Rutgers	3	4	5	4	5
Maryland	2	4	4	5	4
Indiana	0	6	4	5	4

West

Conf.	W	L	Conf.	W	L
Wisconsin	6	0	9	0	0
Northwestern	4	2	6	3	3
Nebraska	3	3	4	5	5
Iowa	3	3	4	5	5
Purdue	2	4	4	5	5
Minnesota	1	5	4	5	5
Illinois	0	6	2	7	7

Game of the week: No. 11 Ohio State vs. No. 13 Michigan State.

The Buckeyes have not lost back-to-back games under Urban Meyer and his teams have only lost consecutive games four times in 16 seasons; Then again, Meyer's teams had never given up 50 points until last week in a 55-24 upset against unranked Iowa. Wins over the Spartans and Michigan would put Ohio State back in the conference championship game.

Inside the numbers: Northwestern became the first FBS program ever to win three consecutive overtime games after the Wildcats' 31-24 victory at Nebraska last Saturday.

Player to watch: Michigan State QB Brian Lewerke. The Spartans were expected to lean on their running game this season, but Lewerke has become the key to the offense, attempting 113 passes over the past two games and reaching 400 yards passing in each. He can give Michigan State the inside track to a division title with an upset against Clemson's tough run defense.

ACC

Atlantic Division

Conf.	W	L	Conf.	W	L
Clemson	6	1	8	1	8
NC State	4	1	6	3	3
Boston College	3	3	5	4	4
Florida St.	3	3	5	4	4
Syracuse	2	3	5	4	4
Wake Forest	2	3	5	4	4
Louisville	2	4	4	5	4

Coastal Division

Conf.	W	L	Conf.	W	L
Miami	6	0	8	0	8
Virginia Tech	2	2	6	3	3
Georgia Tech	2	3	5	4	4
Pittsburgh	2	3	5	4	4
Duke	1	5	4	5	4
North Carolina	0	6	3	5	4

Game of the week: No. 3 Notre Dame at No. 7 Miami. A pair of College Football Playoff hopefuls meet in Miami to renew the rivalry that was a must-see matchup in the late 1980s with Jimmy Johnson and Lou Holtz on the sidelines. The Hurricanes have their best ranking since they also reached No. 7 in 2013, and are on the verge of clinching their first ACC championship game berth. The Irish (8-1) haven't been ranked this high since 2012, when they climbed to No. 1 and reached the BCS title game.

Inside the numbers: Clemson has won nine straight games against Top 25 opponents — the longest such streak in program history.

Player to watch: Florida State freshman Cam Akers. He showed why he was one of the most heavily recruited running backs in his class. Akers rushed for a season-best 199 yards and two touchdowns in the Seminoles' victory over Syracuse, reaching triple digits for the third time this season. He'll try to keep it going against Clemson's tough run defense.

Pac-12

North

Conf.	W	L	Conf.	W	L
Washington	5	1	8	1	8
Washington St.	5	2	8	1	8
Stanford	5	2	6	3	3
Arizona	4	2	5	4	4
California	2	5	5	4	4
Oregon	2	5	5	4	4

South

Conf.	W	L	Conf.	W	L
Southern Cal	6	1	8	2	2
Arizona	4	2	6	3	3
Utah	4	2	5	4	4
UCLA	2	4	4	5	4
Colorado	2	5	5	4	4

Game of the week: No. 19 Washington State at Utah. The Cougars can head to the Apple Cup against No. 9 Washington in control of their Pac-12 North title hopes with a win over the Utes, who ended a four-game skid with a victory over UCLA last week. Utah now has to sustain that success after facing UCLA's porous run defense that ranks No. 129 out of 130 in the NCAA.

Inside the numbers: Washington's Dante Pettis set an FBS career record last week with his ninth punt return for a touchdown.

Player to watch: Southern Cal QB Sam Darnold. The Sophomore is 17-3 as a starter, including a 11-0 mark at home, and a victory by the Trojans over Colorado on Saturday will clinch the South Division. After his 20-of-26 performance for 311 yards and two touchdowns vs. Arizona, Darnold has thrown for at least 200 yards in 19 games and at least three TD passes in a game 10 times.

SERVICE ACADEMIES



Air Force vs. Wyoming
Last week: Lost 21-0 to Army
Next game: at Boise State, Nov. 18



Army vs. Duke
Last week: Beat Air Force 21-0
Next game: at North Texas, Nov. 18



Navy at SMU
Last week: Lost to Temple 34-26
Next game: at North Dame, Nov. 18

AP TOP 25 SCHEDULE

Friday

No. 9 Washington at Stanford

Saturday

No. 1 Alabama at No. 18 Mississippi State

No. 2 Georgia at No. 10 Auburn

No. 3 Notre Dame at No. 7 Miami

No. 4 Clemson vs. Florida State

No. 5 Oklahoma vs. No. 8 TCU

No. 6 Wisconsin vs. No. 25 Iowa

No. 11 Ohio State vs. No. 13 Michigan State

No. 12 Oklahoma State at No. 24 Iowa State

No. 14 UCF vs. UConn

No. 15 Southern Cal at Colorado

No. 16 Penn State vs. Rutgers

No. 17 Virginia Tech at Georgia Tech

No. 19 Washington State at Utah

No. 21 Michigan at Maryland

No. 23 West Virginia at Kansas State

SEC

East

Conf.	W	L	Conf.	W	L
Georgia	6	0	9	0	9
South Carolina	4	3	6	3	3
Kentucky	3	4	3	5	5
Florida	3	4	3	5	5
Texas A&M	2	5	5	4	4
Tennessee	0	5	4	5	4
Vanderbilt	0	5	4	5	4

West

Conf.	W	L	Conf.	W	L
Alabama	6	0	9	0	9
Mississippi	3	2	6	3	3
Mississippi St.	3	2	7	2	7
LSU	2	4	5	4	4
Texas A&M	2	4	5	4	4
Arkansas	2	4	4	5	4

Game of the week: No. 2 Georgia (No. 1 CFP) at No. 10 Auburn (No. 10). Alabama and Georgia might not be the SEC's only playoff contenders. Though Auburn already has lost two games, the Tigers are high enough in the CFP rankings that they could work their way into the top four if they win out. The first step is winning Saturday. This will mark just the fourth time in the 121-game history of the series that both teams have been ranked in the top 10 at the time of their matchup.

Inside the numbers: South Carolina has won four of its last seven meetings with Florida. Before that stretch, the Gamecocks had gone just 4-2-3 in the series.

Player to watch: Kentucky RB Benny Snell Jr. He is 103 yards away from becoming the first player in school history to rush for 1,000 yards in consecutive seasons. He has run for 356 yard and six TDs over Kentucky's last two games. His 897 yards rushing this season lead the SEC, though Kentucky's Koryn Johnson has more yards rushing per game.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL PREVIEW

Things to know

By JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

North Carolina closed out the 2016-17 season by holding off upstart Gonzaga for its sixth national championship.

April seems so long ago now.

College basketball has undergone a major shift since the Tar Heels cut down the nets, most notably a federal probe into shady recruiting practices that ensnared several prominent programs.

The changes have come on the court, too, with teams losing key players, star freshmen filling their places, new coaches taking over prominent programs.

To get you ready for the season, which starts on Friday, here's a rundown of the top teams, players and coaches for 2017-18:

Top teams

Duke. No. 1 with another one-and-done in Marvin Bagley III joining Grayson Allen.

Michigan State. Could be Tom Izzo's most talented team with Miles Bridges back. He's gone deep into March with less.

Arizona. Alonzo Trier and freshman big man Deandre Ayton headline what could be Sean Miller's best shot at making the Final Four.

Kansas. Rebuild is not in the vocabulary in Lawrence. More like reload.

Kentucky. Coach Cal has another batch of budding pros, even if they will be the youngest he's had in Lexington.

Top players

Bridges, Michigan State. Was one of college basketball's best last season. Should be better after skipping out on a shot at the NBA.

Bonzie Colson, Notre Dame. Double-double machine will carry the Irish far.

Trier, Arizona. One of the nation's best scorers and clutch players.

Jalen Brunson, Villanova. Scores, shoots, dishes, leads.

Can't ask for much more.

Joel Berry II, North Carolina. Last season's Most Outstanding Player of the Final Four will miss the start of the season after punching a wall and breaking his hand, but watch out when he gets back.

Key nonconference games

No. 1 Duke vs. No. 2 Michigan State, Nov. 14 in Chicago. A 1-2 matchup this early is a great way to get the season rolling.

No. 4 Kansas vs. No. 5 Kentucky, Nov. 14 in Chicago. Talk about a marquee doubleheader nightcap in the Windy City.

No. 1 Duke at Indiana, Nov. 29. Blueblood battle in Bloomington.

No. 14 Notre Dame at No. 2 Michigan State, Nov. 30. Bonzie Colson vs. Miles Bridges? We'll take that every day.

No. 16 Louisville at No. 5 Kentucky, Dec. 29. Always epic.

The freshmen

Michael Porter Jr., Missouri. He's 6-foot-10, scores, shoots, gets to the rim, has NBA scouts following his every move.

Bagley, Duke. Graduated early to start college. The Blue Devils are thankful he did.

Ayton, Arizona. He's 7-1, 260 pounds and an NBA-ready game that should translate well in the desert.

Mohamed Bamba, Texas. Opposing shooters will need to be wary when the Longhorns' big man is around the basket.

Hamidou Diallo, Kentucky. Enrolled last January in hopes of joining the Wildcats for the second half of the season. The extra practice time should help him have a huge impact on a team full of potential impact players.

New coaches

Archie Miller, Indiana. Looks like the perfect fit to turn the Hoosiers around.

David Padgett, Louisville. Inherits turmoil with the firing of Rick Pitino, but has a talented roster to work with.

Cuonzo Martin, Missouri. Left Cal for Columbia. The addition of Porter will ease his transition.

Chris Holtman, Ohio State. Did well at Butler. Takes over the reins in Columbus after Thad Matta retired.

Brian Dutcher, San Diego State. Taking over for a legend is never easy, but Dutcher was Steve Fisher's right-hand man for years.

Michigan State's Miles Bridges

Al. GOLDS/AP



JULIE JACOBSON/AP

Controversial Duke guard Grayson Allen, right, provides some needed experience to the top-ranked Blue Devils' freshman-laden roster.

ACC trio tops list of seniors

By STEVE MEGARGE
Associated Press

Notre Dame forward Bonzie Colson's deliberation over whether to turn pro or return for his senior year was never much of a debate.

"It was like a five-minute discussion," Notre Dame coach Mike Brey said. "He knew he was a four-year guy. His family knew he was a four-year guy. I thought maybe he would at least want to go up to Chicago and test the waters. (He said), 'Coach, (I'm) not into it.'"

Even in an era when freshmen have an increasingly large role in college basketball, there still are plenty of four-year guys making an impact.

Kansas' Frank Mason Jr. was named the AP player of the year as a senior last season. Oklahoma's Buddy Hield won the 2015-16 Naismith Trophy as the nation's top player his senior season.

Colson says he knew it was the right decision for him to return for his senior year as well.

"I knew I had a lot of development on both sides of the floor that I needed to work on," Colson said. "But obviously getting the degree from Notre Dame is what I went to Notre Dame for, and I knew I was a four-year guy."

This list of top seniors heading into the 2017-18 season shows there are plenty of notable "four-year guys" in the Atlantic Coast Conference this year.

Grayson Allen, Duke

Position: Guard

Height: 6-foot-5

Notes: As the only returning Duke player who averaged more than eight minutes last season, Allen provides some needed experience to the top-ranked Blue Devils' freshman-laden roster. Allen averaged 21.6 points, 4.6 rebounds and 3.5 assists two years ago to earn AP All-America third-team honors. He had 14.5 points, 3.7 rebounds and a team-high 3.5 assists per game during a turbulent junior season in which he was stripped of his captaincy after getting caught tripping an opponent three times in a calendar year. Allen has regained that captain status this year.

Joel Berry II, North Carolina

Position: Guard

Height: 6 feet

Notes: Berry was named the most outstanding player of the Final Four after scoring 22 points and dishing out six assists with only one turnover in the Tar Heels' NCAA championship game victory over Gonzaga. He did all that despite playing the NCAA Tournament with a pair of sprained ankles. He has another injury that could cause him to miss the start of this season for the ninth-ranked Tar Heels. North Carolina coach Roy Williams said Berry broke a bone in his right hand punching a door after losing a video game. Berry is one of only seven players never to score at least 20 points in two straight national championship games and one of only six North Carolina players ever to start in two national championship games.

Trevon Bluiett, Xavier

Position: Guard

Height: 6-6

Notes: Big East coaches have given Bluiett first-team all-conference honors each of the last two seasons. Bluiett ranked second in the Big East in scoring (18.5) and 10th in rebounding (5.7) last season while also making 2.5 3-pointers per game. He averaged 21.3 points in four NCAA Tournament games to help Xavier advance to a regional final. Bluiett's big tournament performance included a 29-point outburst in a victory over Florida State and a 25-point effort in a Sweet 16 upset of Arizona. He averaged 15.1 points and 6.1 rebounds two seasons ago. He's back for his senior year to help No. 17 Xavier seek an elusive Final Four berth.

Bonzie Colson, Notre Dame

Position: Forward

Height: 6-6

Notes: Colson is the ACC preseason player of the year and the lone senior to make the AP All-America preseason team. Colson can score in a variety of different ways and has found a way to thrive in the paint for the 14th-ranked Fighting Irish despite his relative lack of height. Colson averaged a double-double last season while earning AP All-America third-team honors. He led the ACC in rebounding (10.1) and ranked ninth in the conference in scoring (17.8). He averaged 22.7 points in the ACC tournament and scored 27 points while shooting 10 of 15 in an NCAA Tournament loss to West Virginia.

Devonte Graham, Kansas

Position: Guard

Height: 6-2

Notes: Graham heads into his final college season as the Big 12 preseason player of the year. The fourth-ranked Jayhawks will be relying on Graham to emerge as the leader of the backcourt as they replace Mason. Graham ranked 13th in the Big 12 in scoring (13.4), sixth in assists (4.1), second in three-pointers (2.6) and ninth in steals (1.5) last season. He averaged 11.3 points and 3.7 assists two seasons ago.

Yante Maten, Georgia

Position: Forward

Height: 6-8

Notes: Maten ranked fourth in the SEC in scoring (18.2), ninth in rebounding (6.8), ninth in blocks (1.5) and second in field-goal percentage (.519) last season. That followed a sophomore year in which he ranked ninth in the SEC in scoring (16.5) and sixth in rebounding (8.0). Maten heads into his senior year trying to earn the NCAA Tournament berth that has eluded Georgia the last two seasons. He was named the Southeastern Conference's preseason co-player of the year along with Missouri freshman Michael Porter Jr. and Texas A&M sophomore Robert Williams.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL PREVIEW

Scandal: Federal investigation hanging over start of season

FROM BACK PAGE

is also among them — will play with uncertainty; whether its players will remain eligible, if the investigation will reach all the way to the head coach, if NCAA sanctions are on the horizon.

The other major programs, particularly those with high-end recruits, could be looking over their shoulders all season to see if they will become ensnared.

"You have to eliminate the clutter and understand the class has to be tight," Arizona coach Sean Miller. "You have to talk to people, but only we know what happens on a daily basis in our program."

On the court, Miller has the type of team that could end his Final Four-less run. The Wildcats have a solid core of experienced players returning from last year's Elite Eight team — preseason All-American Alonzo Trier among them — to go with a stellar recruiting class, highlighted by athletic big man Deandre Ayton.

Of course, there are plenty of deep, talented teams capable of making a run to San Antonio.

Duke is the preseason No. 1 for the second straight season with senior Grayson Allen back and the addition of Marvin Bagley III, coach Mike Krzyzewski's latest one-and-done wonder.

Michigan State's Tom Izzo always seems to get the most out of his team in March and has plenty to work with this season, playing with a stacked deck bolstered by the return of preseason All-American Miles Bridges.

No. 4 Kansas has reloading and is gunning for Big 12 title No. 14 in a row. So has No. 5 Kentucky, but you knew that already; Coach Cal is never without a roster full of future NBA players.

Defending national champion North Carolina lost a lot from a year ago, but the return of point guard Joel Berry II was huge for the Tar Heels, even if he will miss the start of the season after breaking his hand punching a door.

"We're not defending (the na-

tional championship) because it's not the same team playing against the same teams, but we're the only team that can go out and say we could do this a second year in a row," Tar Heels coach Roy Williams said.

Don't count out the mid majors, who have been major players since Butler reached consecutive Final Fours from 2010-11.

Gonzaga reached the title game a year ago and took the Tar Heels to the wire. The Zags lost a lot from that team, but came in at No. 18 in the AP preseason poll and coach Mark Few has another talented group.

This year it could be Wichita State. Coach Gregg Marshall, who has spurned offers from other schools to remain in Wichita, has his entire starting five back and a stronger schedule — for NCAA Tournament seeding purposes — after the Shockers' move to the AAC.

"My job got better in terms of the profile of the league and the opportunity to get in the NCAA Tournament," Marshall said.

And don't forget about the freshmen. Every year seems to bring bigger, more athletic players straight out of high school, and this season is no exception.

Bagley is 6 feet, 11 inches of do everything, making a good Duke team even better. Same thing with Ayton, though at 7-1, 260 pounds, Kentucky has five high school All-Americans.

The best of the bunch could be Missouri's Michael Porter Jr. He is 6-10, can shoot, score off the dribble, is a preseason All-American, the projected No. 1 NBA draft pick and has been compared to a young Kevin Durant. He's going to get plenty of shots in Columbia, too.

"He's long and fast and skilled, got tremendous feel, I.Q." Florida coach Mike White said. "He's going to be a really good player."

The 2017-18 season will be filled with them. Whether they'll be enough to pull the sport from under the dark cloud hanging over it remains to be seen.



Rick SCUTEN/AP

Arizona coach Sean Miller has the type of team that could end his Final Four-less run. The Wildcats have a strong core of experienced players returning from an Elite Eight team last season to with a stellar recruiting class, led by athletic big man Deandre Ayton.



GERY BROOME/AP

North Carolina's Cameron Johnson speaks with reporters during media day in Chapel Hill, N.C., last month. A few of last year's Final Four teams have added transfers to help restock their rosters, including the defending national champs, who added Johnson as a graduate transfer from Pittsburgh.

Some Final Four teams expect boost from graduate transfers

By STEVE MEGARGE

Associated Press

A few of last year's Final Four teams have added transfers to help restock.

That's particularly apparent at Oregon.

The Ducks had to replace four starters from last year's Final Four team and responded by adding a pair of graduate transfers — Elijah Brown from New Mexico and MiKylé McIntosh from Illinois State. They join Georgetown transfer Paul White, who sat out 2016-17 due to NCAA transfer rules.

Brown could have the biggest impact of the newcomers after leading New Mexico in scoring the last two seasons.

"We knew we were going to be losing a lot of scorers, and he had scored very well," Oregon coach Dana Altman said. "We do have to improve his efficiency. His shooting percentages, his assist-to-turnover ratio have to improve. But I think he's a very gifted offensive player."

Defending national champion North Carolina also added a graduate transfer by signing Cameron Johnson from Pittsburgh, while South Carolina is hoping former Delaware guard Kory Holden can help the Gamecocks make up for all the backcourt firepower they lost from their Final Four team.

"Everybody loves him," North Carolina coach Roy Williams said of Johnson. "He's worked extremely hard in practice, and I expect he's going to be a very good player for us."

Here's a look at some transfers poised to make an impact this season. As this list shows, some teams are following Oregon's model in relying on multiple transfers.

G Elijah Brown, F MiKylé McIntosh and F Paul White, Oregon

Height/Class: Brown: 6-foot-4/Senior. McIntosh: 6-7/Senior. White: 6-9/Junior

Former school: Brown: New Mexico and Butler. McIntosh: Illinois State. White: Georgetown.

Notes: Brown, the son of Golden State Warriors assistant coach Mike Brown, averaged 18.9 points, 5.2 rebounds and 3.1 assists last season at New Mexico to earn second-team all-Mountain West honors. He was a first-team all-Mountain West selection two years ago, when he had 17.7 points and 5.5 rebounds per game. McIntosh was a second-team all-Missouri Valley Conference choice last season with 12.5 points and 5.6 rebounds per game. White had 5 points and 2.8 rebounds per game for Georgetown two seasons ago.

G Jalen Hudson and G Egor Koulechov, Florida

Height/Class: Hudson: 6-6/Junior. Koulechov: 6-5/Senior

Former schools: Hudson: Virginia Tech. Koulechov: Rice and Arizona State.

Notes: Both Hudson and Koulechov should play major roles for Florida as the Gators look to contend for a Southeastern Conference title. Hudson missed last season due to NCAA transfer rules after scoring 8.4 points per game for Virginia Tech in 2015-16. Koulechov, who began his career at Arizona State, comes to Florida as a graduate transfer after averaging 18.2 points and 8.9 rebounds for Rice and earning first-team all-Conference USA honors last season.

G Cameron Johnson, North Carolina

Height/Class: 6-8/Junior
Former school: Pittsburgh

Notes: Johnson started all 33 games for Pittsburgh last season and was the Panthers' top three-point shooter. He averaged 11.9 points, 4.5 rebounds and 2.3 assists while making 41.5 percent (78 of 188) of his three-point attempts. North Carolina should know him well, as Johnson matched a career high by scoring 24 points last season against the eventual national champion Tar Heels.

G Caleb Martin, G Cody Martin and G Kendall Stephens, Nevada

Height/Class: Caleb Martin: 6-7/Junior. Cody Martin: 6-7/Junior. Stephens: 6-7/Senior.

Notes: The Martin twins were both part-time starters at North Carolina State before sitting out last season due to NCAA transfer rules. Caleb Martin averaged 11.4 points and 4.7 rebounds in 2015-16. Cody Martin had 6 points, 4.4 rebounds and 2.3 assists per game that season. Stephens averaged 8.7 points in 2014-15 and 6.1 points in 2015-16 for Purdue before sitting out last season. Stephens averaged 22.3 points in Nevada's three exhibition games.

F Malik Newman, Kansas

Height/Class: 6-3/Sophomore
Former school: Mississippi State

Notes: The former McDonald's All-American was rated as the nation's No. 8 overall prospect in his high school class, according to a composite ranking of recruiting sites compiled by 247Sports. He averaged 11.3 points at Mississippi State in 2015-16 before sitting out last season due to NCAA transfer rules.

NFL

Halfway there

Unexpected performances making predictions difficult

By BARRY WILNER
Associated Press

Predicting what's ahead in an NFL season is no easier than forecasting the weather. Given all the variables, it's probably harder.

The team of September, the Chiefs, went mediocre on us in October and early November. Those struggling Patriots who were 2-2 now seem on course for yet another hosting role in the AFC playoffs.

Early season woes for the Giants that were dismissed as temporary have become chronic. That ugly 0-2 start for the Saints has turned into a beautiful six-game winning streak.

See?

No matter. Here are some things to look for as we move through November and December:

More QB injuries

This has been the overriding story of the season, with Aaron Rodgers, Carson Palmer, sensational rookie Deshaun Watson and Sam Bradford all going down. Ryan Tannehill didn't even make it out of the preseason, and Andrew Luck's shoulder didn't heal enough after winter surgery for him to suit up.

Speculating who might be the next quarterback or three who will suffer a major injury is



Ron Schwane/AP

Cleveland head coach Hue Jackson is on the hot seat as the Browns remain winless at the halfway point of the season.

ghoulis. Consider, though, that nine teams (Tampa Bay, Minnesota, Green Bay, Arizona, Tennessee, Oakland, Houston, Miami and Baltimore) have had to go to backups because of injured starters.

Officiating controversy

This one is unavoidable, and will occur weekly. Seems as if no weekend goes by without a pool re-



The Texans lost QB Deshaun Watson for the season to a torn ACL.
Jason E. Mieczak/AP



Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP

San Francisco 49ers offensive guard Laken Tomlinson, left, and offensive tackle Trent Brown sit on the bench during the second half Sunday against the Arizona Cardinals in Santa Clara, Calif. The 49ers are hoping for their first victory of the season this weekend against the Giants.

porter being sent to talk to game officials about a decision.

As video replay becomes more refined — we can just about count the blades of grass under a receiver's hands as he cradles (or doesn't) a pass — and the NFL rulebook remains far too complex, officiating will continue to play a huge role in outcomes of games.

One request: no more reversals like what we saw in Falcons-Lions and Patriots-Jets that fans will be questioning into the new year.

Hotter seats

Other than Hue Jackson in Cleveland, the fire figures to burn very hot under the Buccaneers' Dirk Koetter; the Giants' Ben McAdoo; the Bengals' Marvin Lewis, whose contract is up this year; the Colts' Chuck Pagano, who could get a pass because he's had no, ahem, luck with his passer; and possibly the Lions' Jim Caldwell. New York and Detroit are among the league's biggest underachievers, and that likely won't change in 2017.

Passion if not skill

It would be difficult to find a club that would trade its roster for what the Jets or Bears have. It also would be tough to point out any teams that play with more passion and dedication.

There's no reason to believe either of them will stop giving their all for 60 minutes. New York is 4-5 in a year some projected it wouldn't win a game and was tanking for the top overall draft pick. With any finishing power, the Jets would be in the playoff hunt.

Chicago is 3-5 despite an inept



Bill Kestrou/AP

Jets tight end Austin Seferian-Jenkins, center, loses his grip on the ball as he is tackled by Patriots Malcolm Butler, left, and Duron Harmon on Oct. 15. After further review the play was ruled a fumble into the end zone.

passing game, and has beaten Pittsburgh and Carolina. The Bears simply don't go away. Maybe they aren't the Monsters of the Midway, but they sure are pesky.

Give tremendous credit to coaches Todd Bowles and John Fox. And expect more of the same from both teams the rest of the way.

A tie or two

One thing we've learned from the reduced overtime period (from 15 minutes to 10) is that a tie is hardly unlikely. Indeed, getting more than one possession in OT can be problematic.

So expect at least one dead-lock down the stretch, and let's hope it won't figure into playoff tiebreakers.

Early clinchings

With two highly regarded divisions, the AFC West and North, turning soft, watch for the Steelers and Chiefs to be selling playoff tickets by mid-December. Same for the Patriots, but that's a

yearly occurrence in the mediocre AFC East.

Barring a stunning turnaround, the Eagles, at 8-1 the league's top team, will be making postseason plans about a month from now. The Saints, too, if their defense remains stout.

Win for San Francisco. And Cleveland.

Just kidding.

Actually, the 49ers beating the Giants this Sunday hardly is far-fetched, though the odds would be much shorter if Jimmy Garoppolo was ready.

San Francisco then has a bye before hosting Seattle, visiting Chicago and Houston, home for Tennessee and Jacksonville and at the Rams.

The road for Cleveland has a trip to Detroit, home for Jacksonville, at Cincinnati and the Chargers, home for Green Bay and Baltimore, to road games at Chicago and Pittsburgh.

Either — decide which team — if either — has a better shot at a victory.



GAMEDAY

WEEK 10

TELEVISED GAMES



Los Angeles Chargers (3-5)
at Jacksonville Jaguars (3-5)

AFN-Sports2
7 p.m. Sunday CET
3 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Chargers lead 7-2.

Last meeting: Chargers beat Jaguars 28-14, Sept. 18, 2016.

Notes: Both teams have won three of last four games. ... Chargers have won six straight in series, outscoring Jaguars by combined 116 points. Chargers QB Philip Rivers has torched Jacksonville in recent years. He's completed 74.6 percent of his passes for 1,810 yards, with 18 TDs and two INTs, during six-game win streak.



Houston Texans (3-5)
at Los Angeles Rams (6-2)

AFN-Sports2
10 p.m. Sunday CET
6 a.m. p.m. Monday JKT

Series: Rams lead 2-1.

Last meeting: Rams beat Texans 38-13, Oct. 13, 2013.

Notes: Texans averaged 28.6 points per game with rookie DeShaun Watson at quarterback. ... QB Tom Savage threw first career TD pass last week in first start since Watson's knee injury sidelined him for season. ... Rams get first home game in 35 days after two East Coast trips, London "home" game, and bye week.

Game capsules compiled from AP

Marquee matchup

New Orleans Saints (6-2) at Buffalo Bills (5-3)

AFN-Sports, 7 p.m. Sunday CET 3 a.m. Monday JKT

SERIES RECORD: Saints lead series 6-4

LAST MEETING: Saints beat Bills 35-17, Oct. 27, 2013
LAST WEEK: Saints beat Buccaneers 30-10; Bills lost to Jets 34-21

SAINTS OFFENSE: OVERALL (2), RUSH (7), PASS (4)
SAINTS DEFENSE: OVERALL (15), RUSH (19), PASS (12)

BILLS OFFENSE: OVERALL (26), RUSH (11), PASS (30)

BILLS DEFENSE: OVERALL (22), RUSH (8), PASS (26)

STREAKS, STATS AND NOTES:

Saints have won four straight against Bills since 45-33 loss at New Orleans on Dec. 27, 1998, and have won three straight at Orchard Park, New York, since 27-21 loss on Oct. 30, 1983.

... The Saints' six-game winning streak matches sixth longest in team history, and best since eight-game run to close 2011 season. Chance to open season 7-2

or better for seventh time and first since 7-2 start in 2013. ... QB Drew Brees has NFL-leading 108 career games with 300 yards passing since rookie season in 2001. Bills have 19 over same span. ... Rookie RB Alvin Kamara had season-best 152 yards from scrimmage (68 rushing, 84 receiving) and two TDs against Bucs. ... DE Cameron Jordan had 1 1/2 sacks against Tampa Bay to up team-leading total to seven. Saints' 23 sacks are seven short of matching last year's total. ... Bills haven't opened 6-3 or better since 1999, last time team made playoffs. ... First-year coach Sean McDermott spent previous six seasons as Panthers defensive coordinator, during which Carolina had 7-5 record against NFC South rival Saints. ... Bills are 4-0 at home, joining Philadelphia (5-0) as two remaining NFL teams without home loss. ... WR Kelvin Benjamin set to make Bills debut after being acquired in trade with Carolina on Oct. 31. ... Offense averaging 361 yards in four home games versus 246 in four road games.



Saints running back Alvin Kamara
BU, FRI/AP



Dallas Cowboys (5-3)
at Atlanta Falcons (4-4)

AFN-Sports
10:25 p.m. Sunday CET
6:25 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Cowboys lead 16-10.

Last meeting: Falcons beat Cowboys 39-28, Sept. 27, 2015.

Notes: Cowboys coach Jason Garrett is 0-2 vs. Falcons. ... Falcons 3-1 vs. NFC opponents; Cowboys 4-2 vs. NFC. ... Cowboys second in league with 148.1 yards rushing per game. ... Falcons only 17th with average of 21.2 points after leading league with 33.8 points per game in 2016.



New England Patriots (6-2)
at Denver Broncos (3-5)

AFN-Sports
2:20 a.m. Monday CET
10:20 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Broncos lead 30-22.

Last meeting: Patriots beat Broncos 16-3, Dec. 18, 2016.

Notes: Bill Belichick is 8-10 against Denver. ... QB Tom Brady is 3-7 in his career at Denver but has eight TDs and zero interceptions in last five trips to Denver. ... QB Brock Osweiler makes first home start for Broncos since Jan. 3, 2016. ... RB C.J. Anderson had 153 scrimmage yards and two TDs in his last game against New England.

Also on AFN:

Miami Dolphins (4-4) at Carolina Panthers (6-3), AFN-Sports, 2:15 a.m. Tuesday CET, 10:15 a.m. Tuesday JKT

EXPANDED STANDINGS

American Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	East			AFC	NFC	Div
					PF	PA	Home			
New England	6	2	0	.750	216	179	3-2-0	3-1-0	3-1-0	1-0-0
Buffalo	5	3	0	.625	174	149	4-0-0	1-3-0	3-2-0	2-1-0
Miami	4	4	0	.500	116	179	2-2-0	2-2-0	3-3-0	1-1-0
N.Y. Jets	4	5	0	.444	191	207	2-2-0	1-3-0	4-4-0	0-1-0
South										
Tennessee	5	3	0	.625	181	193	3-1-0	2-2-0	4-3-0	1-0-0
Jacksonville	5	3	0	.625	206	117	2-2-0	3-1-0	5-2-0	0-1-0
Houston	3	5	0	.375	229	208	2-3-0	1-2-0	3-4-0	0-1-0
Indianapolis	3	6	0	.333	162	260	2-2-0	1-4-0	2-3-0	1-3-0
North										
Pittsburgh	6	2	0	.750	167	131	2-1-0	4-1-0	4-1-0	2-1-0
Baltimore	4	5	0	.444	190	171	2-2-0	2-3-0	4-3-0	0-2-0
Cincinnati	4	5	0	.375	129	158	2-2-0	1-3-0	3-4-0	0-1-0
Cleveland	0	8	0	.000	119	202	0-5-0	0-3-0	0-7-0	0-1-0
West										
Kansas City	6	3	0	.667	253	208	3-1-0	3-2-0	4-2-0	2-1-0
Oakland	4	5	0	.444	196	214	2-2-0	2-3-0	4-4-0	0-1-0
Denver	3	5	0	.375	150	198	3-1-0	0-4-0	2-3-0	1-2-0
L.A. Chargers	3	5	0	.375	150	152	1-3-0	2-2-0	2-4-0	1-1-0

National Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	NFC	AFC	Div
Philadelphia	8	1	0	.889	283	179	5-0-0	3-1-0	6-0-0	2-1-0	3-0-0
Dallas	5	3	0	.625	226	178	2-2-0	3-1-0	4-2-0	1-1-0	2-0-0
Washington	4	4	0	.500	177	194	2-2-0	2-2-0	3-3-0	1-1-0	0-0-0
N.Y. Giants	1	7	0	.125	129	207	0-4-0	1-3-0	0-6-0	1-1-0	0-2-0
South											
New Orleans	6	2	0	.750	221	155	3-1-0	3-1-0	5-1-0	1-1-0	2-0-0
Carolina	6	3	0	.667	168	159	2-2-0	4-1-0	4-3-0	2-0-0	2-1-0
Atlanta	4	4	0	.500	170	172	1-2-0	3-2-0	3-1-0	1-3-0	0-1-0
Tampa Bay	2	6	0	.250	158	198	2-2-0	0-4-0	2-4-0	0-2-0	0-2-0
North											
Minnesota	6	2	0	.750	179	135	4-1-0	2-1-0	4-1-0	2-1-0	2-1-0
Detroit	4	4	0	.500	206	186	1-3-0	3-1-0	4-3-0	0-1-0	2-0-0
Green Bay	4	4	0	.500	181	191	3-2-0	1-2-0	3-4-0	1-0-0	1-2-0
Chicago	3	5	0	.375	134	171	2-2-0	1-3-0	1-5-0	2-0-0	0-2-0
West											
L.A. Rams	6	2	0	.750	263	155	2-2-0	4-0-0	4-2-0	2-0-0	2-1-0
Seattle	5	3	0	.625	189	149	3-1-0	2-2-0	3-2-0	2-1-0	2-0-0
Arizona	4	4	0	.500	139	201	2-1-0	2-3-0	3-4-0	1-0-0	2-1-0
San Francisco	0	9	0	.000	143	239	0-4-0	0-5-0	0-6-0	0-1-0	0-4-0

REST OF THE SCHEDULE

Pittsburgh at Indianapolis
Minnesota at Washington
Green Bay at Chicago
Cincinnati at Tennessee
N.Y. Jets at Tampa Bay
Cleveland at Detroit
N.Y. Giants at San Francisco
Open: Kansas City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Oakland

NEXT WEEK

Thursday, Nov. 16
Tennessee at Pittsburgh
Sunday, Nov. 19
Baltimore at Green Bay
Arizona at Houston
Tampa Bay at Miami
Washington at New Orleans
Jacksonville at Cleveland
Detroit at Chicago
L.A. Rams at Nevada
Kansas City at N.Y. Giants
Buffalo at L.A. Chargers
New England vs. Oakland at Mexico City
Philadelphia at Dallas
Open: Indianapolis, San Francisco, Carolina, N.Y. Jets
Monday, Nov. 20
Atlanta at Seattle

SPORTS



Growing pains

Some teams doing better than others
acclimating to new faces » **Page 57**

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Worth looking into

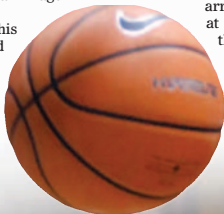
College hoops has never been better, but off-court scandal is distraction

By JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

College basketball is better than ever on the floor. Scoring is up, stars players fill every corner of the country and fan support is sky high.

Off the floor, it has an image problem.

A federal probe this summer uncovered the dark underbelly of college basketball, revealing a web of bribes and kickbacks from shoe companies funneled toward recruits. The



'It's a big egg on a lot of our faces. It kind of speaks for the entire entity, and we're part of it.'

Larry Krystkowiak

Utah head coach, on the NCAA bribery and kickback scandal uncovered by a federal investigation this summer

arrests of 10 people, including assistant coaches at four prominent schools, casts a shadow over the sport heading into the 2017-18 season — and likely beyond.

"It's a big egg on a lot of our faces," Utah coach Larry Krystkowiak said. "It kind of speaks for the entire entity, and

we're part of it."

The federal investigation led to the arrests of assistant coaches from No. 3 Arizona, No. 10 Southern Cal, Oklahoma State and Auburn, along with an Adidas marketing executive. The probe has already taken down No. 16 Louisville coach Rick Pitino and athletic director Tom Jurich, and more shoes could drop as the investigation digs deeper.

The teams already in the crosshairs — Miami

SEE SCANDAL ON PAGE 61

With returning preseason All-American Miles Bridges, pictured, No. 2 Michigan State will field one of its strongest rosters to date under head coach Tom Izzo.

AL GOLDBIS/AP

Unpredictability only guarantee around NFL » **Page 62**

